

# A SOLDIER'S MEMORIES

IN PEACE AND WAR

---

MAJOR-GENERAL  
SIR GEORGE YOUNGHUSBAND



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A SOLDIER'S MEMORIES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR  
THE STORY OF THE GUIDES  
INDIAN FRONTIER WARFARE  
THE RELIEF OF CHITRAL, ETC.



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LORD ROBERTS AT KABUL., CHRISTMAS, 1879  
*From a photograph kindly lent by the Countess Roberts*

# A SOLDIER'S MEMORIES

♣ IN PEACE AND WAR ♣

BY  
MAJOR-GENERAL  
SIR GEORGE <sup>John</sup> YOUNGHUSBAND

K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E., F.R.G.S., ETC.

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# A SOLDIER'S MEMORIES





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## CHAPTER I

### A SANDHURST DUEL, AND OTHER LIGHT ADVENTURES

Sandhurst in 1877—Willyum—The Provocation—The Challenge—Swords or Pistols—Preparations—The Duel—Death of Crawford—His Bequests—Flight to France—The Police—Resurrection—A Matter of Labour—The Plan of Campaign—The Problem of Exit—Arrived at the Scene of Action—The First Success—Five more Successes—Consigned to a Watery Grave—To Bed at Dawn—Why Nothing Happened—Truth Will Out—My Sister Dolly—Milk in Paper Bags—A Dastardly Attack—Another Splendid Tea—Dolly Goes Back to Town—Great Strides in Topography—A Tidy Little Girl—An Eyeglass in Pursuit—Sherry and Lemonade—The Oak Grove—A Meeting on Parade

**T**HIS is not an autobiography, and therefore will not deal with the nursery and early youth. These are merely the memories of a soldier, and as such cannot perhaps more appropriately begin than at Sandhurst, in 1877. If I call to mind the lighter side of Sandhurst life, it is not because there were no serious aspects ; but rather because in our lighter moods we may possibly be of more interest than when portrayed in the hot pursuit of military lore.

During my time there was at Sandhurst a fellow cadet who was rather a simple young man, but withal very good-natured, so he in due course was taken up by the brighter spirits as a subject on whom to exercise their wit and fancy. To this end,

and as the result of a conspiracy, another gentleman-cadet of mild exterior was invited, and incited, to call the simple gentleman-cadet aforesaid,—who went by the name of Willyum,—a Liar, no less, in the largest type, and with the greatest publicity and emphasis. This he accordingly did. But Willyum, to our chagrin, looked at him with great blandness and condescension, and without the least annoyance remarked :

“ Oh, no, not quite all that, old boy ! ”

This was in the days before it was customary to call our best friends liars, as a term of endearment.

“ Yes you are, you are a—let’s see—sanguinary Liar, and I don’t mind who hears me say so,” vociferated the mildly exterior confederate.

“ Well, of course, if you say so, I suppose I am,” assented Willyum with great amiability.

But this would not do at all, there was distinct danger of a fiasco ; so the bystanders, gentlemen-cadets simply pining to wade in someone else’s gore, for the honour of the cloth, exclaimed with one accord :

“ This cannot be, my dear fellow, you simply cannot allow a fellow to call you a damned liar to your face.”

“ Can’t I ? ” said Willyum, much perplexed. “ Then what the doose am I to do ? ”

“ Do ! Do ? Great Heavens ! Why, call him out at once,” his mentors advised. “ You must remember that as a gentleman-cadet you are, though not quite an officer, yet very nearly a gentleman, and you really must not stand insults of this sort.”

“ Oh ! Ah ! indeed, um ! Ought to call him out ? What, to fight ? You don’t say so ? I can’t box for nuts,” replied Willyum, with a pale and weary grin ; for the gravity of the situation was dawning on him.

“ Boxing ! Lord love us ! Boxing ! There is,

needless to say, only one way to wipe out an insult like this, and that is with a sabre, or a pistol," chorused the onlookers in virtuous indignation. Never, assuredly, were so many shocked and outraged people gathered together.

"Must I really?" asked the now unhappy Willyum. "I'm sure he didn't mean it." ("Yes, I did," from the other gentleman.) "And anyway, I have not the least desire to kill him, and don't suppose he is particularly desirous of downing me." ("Not so sure," from the ferocious antagonist.)

"Yes," replied the strictly chivalrous crowd, "unless he apologises to you, you are bound to call him out."

"And he has choice of weapons," added a seasoned old dueller of about seventeen summers.

So friend Willyum was hurried off to the College; and thence, by hand of his Second, sent a challenge to mortal combat to Crawford. Unless, of course, Crawford would apologise and withdraw the objectionable epithet.

Crawford returned a scornful reply, and chose pistols.

The Seconds then selected a secluded spot in the pine woods, up behind the hospital. Where, so they explained to Willyum, the shots were not likely to be heard by the Officers; and where also the soil was light and easily dug; or as an alternative the hospital was near. The hour chosen was tea-time, which, though not an obligatory meal, claimed the attention of most gentlemen-cadets, and all the Officers. Thus too much publicity would be avoided.

On the fatal afternoon, therefore, by devious routes, the two parties, accompanied by a medical student, guest of one of the gentlemen-cadets, assembled at the selected and secluded spot. It was not so secluded, however, but that some

spectators stalked them through the woods and heather, and lying close were witnesses of the tragedy.

Willyum was pale, but firm. Crawford was gloomy, but determined.

The Seconds loaded the pistols, and gave one to each of the combatants. They then placed them back to back, and instructed them carefully in their duties. On a given word they were each to take six paces to their front, turn round, and fire.

"But suppose he goes quicker than I do," objected Crawford, "and turns round and plugs me in the back before I am ready?"

"That is arranged for," replied the Seconds with great dignity; "we shall give the time—one, two, three, four, five, six—in slow time."

"Are you ready?" asked both Seconds; and the medical student took hasty shelter behind the nearest tree.

Then: "Slow march! One, two, three, four, five, six."

There were two simultaneous bangs, and Crawford was seen to stagger, and fall. Indeed, he died very nicely. He forgave Willyum for having shot him, and asked to press his hand. He left messages for his mother, and bequeathed his fox-terrier to me, and his watch to his soldier servant.

Then we hurried Willyum from the horrid scene. He was in a distinctly dazed condition, and could not for the life of him think how he came to make so deadly a shot. The last that he recollected was that when he pulled the trigger beyond recall, the pistol was point-blank on to one of the Seconds. Well, anyway, there it was, and he was infernally sorry; and what on earth was he to do?

It immediately occurred to all that when one man killed another in a duel he invariably "flew to France," or anyway, "fled the country." So we

advised Willyum that the best thing he could do was to fly to France ; and that he had better go and pack his clothes at once, before the police, like sleuth-hounds, were on his track. We also magnanimously agreed that we would make up a purse between us to assist him in his flight.

We then locked him into his room to pack, leaving a gentleman-cadet with him to see that he did not hang himself, or do anything else foolish, and ourselves mounted guard outside.

Just as Willyum had finished packing, and had been disguised with a corked moustache, there came a thundering knock at the door.

" My God ! The Police ! " exclaimed Willyum, and made for the window, with his guardian gentleman-cadet hanging on to him in determined manner.

" Don't be an idiot, my good ass ! It is a thirty feet drop ! "

Another thundering knock at the door, and imminent signs of its bursting through.

" Who is there ? " asked Willyum, in a voice of stern despair.

" Why, I am, you old Juggins ! " yelled the loud and cheerful voice of the corpse.

Perhaps no one in his life was ever so glad to see a corpse as was Willyum on that historic occasion. He literally hugged that corpse, and at once took him off, and the seconds and the guard too, to the ante-room bar to drink his own health.

True, there was some slight coldness between Crawford and myself over the fox-terrier which he had bequeathed to me. He had also considerable difficulty in extracting his watch from his soldier servant, to whom it had at once been given with great and spontaneous magnanimity, to that worthy fellow's intense astonishment.

Thus ended the famous Sandhurst duel.

. . . . .



If there was one thing a gentleman-cadet of those days loathed more than another, it was what was called "digging." That is to say, by the sweat of one's brow, and with picks and shovels, making earthen entrenchments.

"I'd rather lie starko in the open, and take my bally chance," was the prevailing sentiment.

That was because it was part of our daily curriculum (to use the chaste language of the War Office regulations), and therefore *ipso facto* a matter for severe reprobation. But to get up in the middle of the night, and at that unseemly hour to undertake manual labour of the severest type, just because we were supposed to be asleep in nice warm beds, that was a different matter. That was fruit from the forbidden tree, and therefore a source of immense satisfaction to all concerned.

It matters not who first thought of it, men of the greatest genius lie in unknown graves; but his suggestion was that on the last night of our stay as guests of Her Majesty, at the Royal Military College, a select and secret party should rise in the middle of the night, get out of College (no mean feat), go down to York Town, dig up one of the lamp-posts, and throw it into the lake.

The exact object of this feat is not quite apparent to a maturer intellect. The lamp-posts did not belong to the War Office, nor to the Instructors or Professors at the Royal Military College; all of whom were, of course, by tradition and custom, our natural enemies. No, the lamp-posts merely belonged to the City Fathers of York Town, whom we did not even know by sight, much less against whom had we a legitimate cause of complaint. They were also buried deep in macadam and concrete; and the hour selected was midnight, in the not too sultry month of December. Once, however, the conspiracy was started there were no lack of volun-

teers to man the undertaking, but naturally a very deadly secrecy had to be observed, or all might have been discovered and the plot frustrated.

Finally a storming party of eight was chosen to do the actual work in hand ; whilst any others who cared to sneak out and see the fun might do so, on their own.

To get out of the College was the first problem that faced the strategists. The windows facing the lake were all too high, and moreover there was the quarter-guard just inside the main entrance, and patrols prowling about. The lower windows in all the back wings faced a broad and deep area, with spiked railings opposite ; whilst the Sergeant-Instructors and their families slept in the basement below. That did not seem very promising either, though a plank was secured and placed handy, and some stout rope from the bridging stores was also carefully concealed. However, a scouting party found a still better way, for on proceeding down to the kitchen, with great caution and a dark lantern, they found the whole place absolutely deserted, and a safe and easy exit from it near the corner of the old chapel.

So far so good. Next, by a circuitous road through the Oak Grove, the marauders reached the main and only street of York Town. Here it was found that an economical and thoughtful municipality had put out all the lights after midnight, with the laudable intention of saving gas. But as a regrettable sequence, they unfortunately lost a lot of it that night. The lamp-post selected for attack was in a secluded corner, just past the end of the Terrace, where everything was as silent as the grave. But first picquets were posted up and down the road to keep a look-out for roaming policemen, or other undesirable persons.

Then the work began, and it is really extra-

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ordinary what a fearsome noise to guilty ears a pickaxe makes, on a metalled road, on a still and frosty night. One would have thought the whole village, as well as all the Officers living in the Terrace, would have been awakened with one accord ; but they slept like the Seven-and-seventy Sleepers.

"Can't you muffle, or muzzle, the blamed thing ? " asked the leader of the party in a fierce, hoarse whisper.

"No, I can't, sonny. You just come and try. Why the blessed thing's set in adamant at least. I haven't made a scratch yet."

It took many reliefs, and a good deal of honest sweat, and hard words ; and caused several pairs of blistered hands, before the lamp-post showed the least sign of rocking.

"Now then, chuck the rope over the top, and haul all," ordered the bandit leader.

"I say, shan't we blow up the whole bally town if we break the pipes like this ? " enquired an anxious voice. It belonged to the gentleman-cadet who was an adept at "Stinks," as chemistry was elegantly called.

"By Jove, there is something in that," agreed one or two.

"Hang the town," declared the reckless leader ; "take a haul ! "

In about sixty seconds that lamp-post was lying low, and the conspirators felt big men.

"Let's have another down," suggested one of the more adventurous.

"Yes, come on, let's ! " chorused all.

This time a much more prominent and public lamp-post was selected, and that too after severe labour came down—plank ! And yet not a mouse stirred, nor a dog barked.

Finally six lamp-posts lay moribund, and from

six pipe ends was escaping, in large quantities, the precious gas of the citizens.

Everyone was pretty tired, and it was now getting on towards morning, when someone suggested :

“ Let’s chuck them into the lake ! ”

Carried *nem. con.*

So, after more strenuous labour, all six lamp-posts were put into a flat-bottomed fishing punt there was on the lake, and this was paddled out to the island and the lamp-posts were dropped overboard in about six feet, or more, of water.

Then back all, hard as hard could run, for dawn was perilously close.

Happily cooks are not early birds, so the kitchen was safely passed, and an hour’s hard-earned sleep was secured before Réveillé sounded.

Most of us were due to leave by early trains, but it was really more than could be resisted to go down to York Town before departing, to see “ what was happening.”

Happening ! why absolutely nothing ! The gas in ordinary course had been turned off at the main, and though passers-by noticed in a casual way that a lamp-post here and there was absent, it did not strike them as anything extraordinary. Merely been taken up for repair, or to be re-sited, they thought. It wasn’t till we were all safe in London that a bit of a stir began to arise about those lamp-posts. But after a time we heard that the whole matter had settled down into a sort of dark and gloomy mystery, and one which the most cunning police could not unravel.

That story was frequently told for many years to one’s friends, but always with the secret conviction that none of them believed it. A bigger-liar-than-he-looks sort of attitude they assumed. However, truth will out of the deepest well. Whilst



we were at the Staff College, years later, the Sandhurst lake was drained, for some settled purpose ; to kill off the pike, or maybe search for a corpse. And there sure enough, over against the island, resting peacefully at the bottom of the lake, were our six lamp-posts !

. . . . .

One of our batch of cadets made up admirably as a girl, and a very handsome girl to boot, so we had a good deal of fun with her. Her first female appearance in public was as my sister, though as candid friends remarked, she was a doosed sight too good-looking to be any relative of mine. By way of trial run we worked her off first on the Under-Officer of our Division. Everything went off capitally, and about four of us got a free and gorgeous tea at the expense of the Under-Officer.

After tea the Under-Officer most politely took " my sister," Dolly by name, and showed her round the lecture-rooms, and ante-rooms, and dining-rooms, in all of which she showed a most intelligent and ladylike interest. But the most unfortunate thing happened towards the end of such a happy day. In those days gentlemen-cadets used to buy milk down at the pantry, and carried it up to their rooms in paper bags. No one has ever before, or since, seen or heard of milk being carried in paper bags ; but there, and then, it was a cadet custom.

In the course of our promenade, whilst we were going along a passage below a flight of stairs, there chanced to be up the flight of stairs a dastardly fellow, who had recognised the lady as being a particular friend and trigonometrical collaborator. So by way of showing his affection and appreciation he dropped his paper bag of milk, with extraordinary precision, straight on top of a very chaste and costly erection she had on her head. The result was a most

unladylike roar, a flow of the most ungentlemanly abuse, and picking up her skirts she just skipped up the stairs after that unrighteous fellow like a lamp-lighter. That blew the gaff, as the vulgar say, in so far as the Under-Officer was concerned, but he turned out a valuable ally in our next venture.

This was no lesser prey than the Officer of our Division ; a bit of a lady's man, *bien entendu*. Here we scored a complete success from beginning to end, and incidentally secured another simply splendid tea for nothing. True, we nearly had hysterics over the profuse politeness of our host to a lady, whom he had that morning told off with great severity for slackness on parade.

We were again shown all the lecture halls, especially the chief guest's own ; and ante-rooms and mess rooms. But we took exceeding good care to keep clear of possible traps and staircases, and avoided congregations of our fellow cadets with considerable craft. The chief trouble arose when the Officer insisted on walking down to the station with us, for " my sister " Dolly was by way of going back to Town. Even that difficulty was however surmounted, and out of our scanty pocket-money we bought her a return ticket to Woking, and fervently prayed she would be back before next roll-call.

The Officer evidently thought me rather wanting in brotherly affection in not kissing my sister tenderly as we parted, and himself warmly pressed her hand, and gave her *The Queen* and other female fodder to read in the train. All the way back to the College he kept saying what a nice girl my sister was ; and we kept changing the subject to football, or any blamed thing. It was really rather touching how fond of me that gallant fellow became during the rest of the term, and what immense strides I made in the art of topography.

Our last, and perhaps most successful, endeavour, was at the expense of a fellow-cadet. He was one of those dashing fellows who loved the ladies, all of them, with all his heart. And every little bit of bunting that appeared on his horizon he set sail after. So we again dressed up our good-looking comrade, this time as rather a nice, tidy-looking little girl from—well, anywhere, but not my sister this time. With infinite care we smuggled her out, and about dusk let her slip in York Town. As luck would have it, she had not walked more than once up and once down, when the gentleman-cadet with the large heart espied her, and screwing his eyeglass firm in, gave instant pursuit.

“Good evening,” cavalierly.

“Good evening,” prudishly.

“Going for a walk?” ingratiatingly.

“Yes,” artlessly.

“May I come too?” with easy nonchalance.

“You may please yourself,” with invitation.

“I say, you are jolly pretty, you know. Let’s go in and have a drink at the ‘Swan.’”

“Thanks, I don’t mind if I do. Sherry-and-lemonade, please.” This was rather heroic.

After the sherry-and-lemonade they came back through York Town, and branched off towards the Oak Grove; very carefully, and discreetly, stalked behind hedgerows, by quite a respectable crowd of indiscreet onlookers.

Arrived at the Oak Grove, the fond couple seated themselves on the greensward at the foot of an ancient oak, and the old, old story was told again, in moving fashion. Though we were all rather fearful lest our girl’s mess trousers might peep out from the bottom of her skirts; long skirts happily in those days, and the exhibition of an ankle an unpardonable sin.

Still, accidents do happen even in the best managed

dramas, in moments of abandon, or carelessness. However, our girl was a model of careful discretion, and kept the red stripe tidily below. But even the most finished actor cannot bear the strain too long, especially with a lot of idiots giggling behind the hedge.

"Well, I must be going now, duckie," she said sweetly.

"Oh, no, darling, stay a little longer, won't you? There is heaps of time."

"Oh, no, there ain't. I've got to mind me p's and q's and be in early, or mother goes on *that*, and so does father. And as for my brother Tom, 'e'd kill me straight if 'e saw me now, and you too."

"Ferocious fellow, begad. Eh! What? Well, if you must go I suppose you must, but when shall we meet again, darling?"

"TO-MORROW MORNING ON PARADE," answered a gruff voice from under the Dolly Varden hat.

## CHAPTER II

### JOINING

War Clouds in 1878—Cadets to the Rescue—Eastward Bound—  
A Court Martial—Trial and Sentence—Orderly Room Next  
Day—Our Oldest Ally—Invitations to a Dance—The Return  
of the Sabines—The Midshipman's Night—And Advice—  
India First Impressions—Space and Gorgeousness—Saloon  
Carriages—Many Meals—A Short Halt at Allahabad—Another  
at Lahore—From the Tropics to Frost—A Tip—A Double Tip  
in Return—Rumours of War—A Block at Jhelum—A 9th  
Lancer Friend—Cold Drives to Peshawar—In the Rôle of a  
*Khitmutgar*—Bengal Lancers—Join the 17th Foot—Lunch—  
At War Three Hours After—Fitted Out for the Fray—To  
Death or Glory

IT was the year when war with Russia, and war with Afghanistan, were imminent ; when all Europe was in an electric state, and Indian troops were brought to Malta, that a batch of cadets were hastily released from Sandhurst, presumably to stem the tide. History does not appear to be quite decided whether it was the sudden production of these five score young gentlemen, or whether it was the dramatic arrival of the Indian troops, or whether it was merely the united common sense of a few leading politicians that saved Europe from a great war. It was, however, happily saved.

But in Asia, a less sapient potentate, the Amir of Afghanistan, was injudicious enough to challenge his old friends and neighbours, the English, to mortal combat. To this war many of the gentlemen-cadets of 1878 were drafted, and some of them to Her Majesty's 17th Foot ; later known as the



Leicestershire Regiment, of undying fame in France and Mesopotamia.

The voyage to India was much the same then as it is now, except that we sailed in one of Her Majesty's troopships, the *Crocodile* in our case, under the White Ensign ; and lived like rats in the " Pandemonium," instead of being conveyed in comfortable ocean liners, as in more modern days.

The " Pandemonium " was a dark and noisome submarine hole, in which the thirty last-joined subalterns lived, and moved, and had their being. No one would dream of putting even a cow in such a place nowadays. From its position under the sea no fresh air could reach it, and in the Red Sea the heat in these lower regions was like nothing else on earth. Moreover it was against naval and military discipline for subalterns to sleep elsewhere than in this inferno. One still remembers the awful and appalling headaches which racked the weary waker in the morning. But one is young at eighteen ; so that mutton chops, beefsteak, bacon and eggs—"strong man's breakfast," as it was called—came nothing amiss, even after nights such as these.

Of course the usual internecine warfare took place, and occasionally a Subaltern's Court Martial was held. One of these was, perhaps, sufficiently quaint to be recorded. A subaltern was tried, by his peers and brethren of the cloth, for having a face and features "calculated to spread alarm and despondency amongst Her Majesty's forces," to use the picturesque phraseology of the Articles of War. The court martial was held with due formality, except that all wore nightshirts instead of uniform, as more suitable to the place of assembly, and climate. There were the president and members of the court, the prosecutor, the prisoner's friend, and the prisoner himself, guarded by a file of subalterns

armed with nozzles from the fire-hose—a naval offence of the first magnitude, had we known it.

After a careful, if not very prolonged trial, during which eloquent speeches were made both for the prosecution and defence, the prisoner was found guilty of the crime set forth. The president then put on a top hat which some injudicious person had brought on board, by way of black cap, and pronounced sentence. "The prisoner was to be painted blue and yellow in alternate stripes (like a football jersey), with a view to distracting the attention of Her Majesty's forces from the more alarming features of his personality."

The paint was obtained from the ship's carpenter, but the execution of the sentence was rather a tedious job, and it was only with the kind assistance of the prisoner, who took the keenest interest in the proceedings, and himself painted his left arm and right leg, that a satisfactory result was obtained. He really was a masterpiece, and looked perfectly awful! We could do no better, therefore, than let him loose on the "horse-boxes," armed with a bolster. In the "horse-boxes," on the deck above the Pandemonium, lived the Majors and Captains, and on these it was our custom to carry out occasional midnight assaults, when we ourselves could not sleep, and did not see why others should. One portly, and well-nourished Major, really thought that the devil had come for him this time, and let forth an awesome and fearful yell-and-squeak combined. He required a good deal of soothing down, did the well-nourished Major; and some of us had unfortunately to line up at Orderly Room next morning over that episode.

Next astern of us in the Suez Canal was tied up a Portuguese passenger ship, and the thought occurred to several bright spirits simultaneously that we might have a dance, and invite the Portuguese

ladies warmly, and their men coldly, to come on board and join it. The Captain of our ship and the Officer commanding the troops gave their consent, and three of us were sent off with a formal invitation card. Why three were sent is not clear, but probably it was a careful provision on the part of our seniors to keep us out of mischief.

We went in state in the Captain's gig, and arriving at the top of the gangway of our oldest Ally, handed in our invitation card. But unfortunately none of them could read it, whilst none of us knew Portuguese. The situation, however, was saved by one of the envoys, who achieved the brilliant idea of clasping another round the waist and waltzing round, whilst the third envoy whistled a tune. Light out of darkness, and laughter, and much chatter ! Then began Pedro, and Braganza, and De Souza to dash about after Mrs. Pedro, the Misses Braganza, and other Donna Marias ; so that finally six ladies, large and small, but mostly large and well moustached, were collected. These safely tucked into the boat the bluejackets pushed off, and most unfortunately left nearly all the men behind. Our return to H.M.S. *Crocodile* assumed, therefore, somewhat the air of a successful raid ; and one classical student leaning over the rail made some apparently amusing remarks, about ancient Roman History and the Sabines.

The dance was a great success, especially so for a very juvenile midshipman. That desperate fellow captured the largest and most liberally moustached lady—a three-decker he called her—and danced with her continuously, and rapturously. As he afterwards confided, neither of them could speak a word of the other's language. " But, my dear fellow, that don't matter ; when in doubt you just squeeze her hand, quietly but firmly, you know. Not too much though, old son, for one has to be deadly

careful not to overdo it, or they'll elope with you to a cert. ; they are regular volcanoes these southern women, by Aaron's rod they are ! " And he winked with great solemnity and caution.

I had been in India before, but had left it at the early age of three. Yet two things came back to me at once : one was the taste of a mango, and the other was the smell of the mimosa. I also had a sort of dim and distant recollection of the smell of a native, for my old bearer used to carry me pick-a-back across his thigh, from which coign of vantage one has an excellent opportunity for gaining an undying impression of this bouquet.

One's next impression was of great spaciousness, and luxury, and clean clothes, and many baths. None of these stand looking into, especially the clean clothes or baths ; nor is it advisable to enquire too closely into the origin and place of manufacture of the many-coursed meal, or into the corners of the spacious rooms. But these soured thoughts of maturer years do not occur to the gay subaltern.

On his first morning he wakes up finding himself in a great big room, opening by unclosed French windows on to a broad veranda. On the veranda are great palms in tubs, and through them he sees the bright sunshine. A highly obsequious gentleman in brilliant white raiment places a tray with tea and toast and butter by his bedside, and asks when His Royal Highness will take his bath.

The subaltern gives a regal reply and munches his toast with great relish.

To add to the novelty of his surroundings, a crow hops in, looks at him cautiously, hops a little nearer, sees him smiling blandly, and with a quick dash elopes with the subaltern's second piece of toast.

This is all very good fun, and the subaltern gets up, shaves off three mysterious hairs which he calls his beard, and together with another chosen spirit



goes forth before breakfast to see Abdul Rahman's celebrated Arab stables.

But he is not allowed many hours for the delights of Bombay, and towards nightfall, in a very heated condition, he finds himself in a warm railway carriage. But here again he notices with gratification a kind of semi-royal state. At home he generally travelled third-class, unless his father was paying the fare, when he went first. But even thus he only sat up in a comfortably cushioned seat. But here his pal and he had a saloon to themselves, with a bed far larger than is supplied by the company of the *wagon-lits*, running down each side.

On the floor between, his servant has placed his deck-chair, with his pyjamas over the back, and his slippers in front of it. And all free; or even if he had to pay for it, only one penny per mile.

A penny a mile reminds me of twopence a mile, at which rate in those days all Officers in England, even in mufti, could travel first class. A friend of mine, Tam Edwards, a very smart and good-looking young Officer, was travelling from Paddington to Bath. Going up to the ticket window he demanded an Officer's ticket. A very pert Cockney voice from inside snapped out:

" 'Ow am I to know you're an Orficer? "

Tam bent down till his face was framed by the window, and remarked blandly:

" Look! deah fellah, look! "

The ticket came out like a boomerang.

The disillusion comes later, but not to our last-joined subaltern. We were struck with the luxury of our surroundings—saloon carriages, personal servants waiting on us, measured and ample stoppages for prodigious meals, large cigars, fruit at every wayside station, crowds of picturesque natives.

At Allahabad we made our first stop of twenty-four hours, and were again struck with the spacious-



ness of everything. Ground was of no consequence in this immense continent. Each house stood in a great compound, some several acres in size. Even the English shops were not in a row, or street, side by side; they also stood separate like baronial halls in great gardens. The roads looked as broad as the Thames, and were bordered by avenues of trees, and outside these trees, and between the road and the compound walls, were grass rides.

Then we sped on to Lahore, and got our first experience of the size of India climatically. At Bombay we had worn the thinnest of Red Sea clothes, and felt exceedingly hot even in these. At Allahabad we did not notice much difference by day, but towards evening put on an extra garment or two.

Arriving at Lahore in the ruby dawn, we found hoar frost on the ground, and felt excessively cold.

In later years two friends of ours, who had just come through Canada in the winter, said they never felt such intense cold there as they did driving at dawn fifteen miles in an open dogcart in the northern corner of the Punjab. And those who have driven out to a meet of the Peshawar Vale Hounds, which pack meets habitually at dawn, because there is no scent after 10 a.m., can corroborate this.

At Lahore an old brother Officer of my father most hospitably received us, and his house being full, pitched tents for us in the compound. This was another new and enticing experience which appealed to us greatly.

An old Indian Officer who had served long under my father came to see us, and, as is the polite custom of the country, placed his sword and his wealth at our feet. The sword is held lengthways, laid across the palms of his hand, and his wealth is symbolised by a few rupees in the palm of one hand. One is

supposed to touch the sword and then the rupees, thus showing that one has graciously accepted them, and then remit them.

Being quite ignorant of the etiquette of the East, and also of its language, I thanked the old gentleman heartily in English, of which he knew not a word, and said I already had a sword, but pocketed the rupees, being too recently from school to refuse a tip from any elderly gentleman. Our host was greatly amused at my gaucherie, and at once made me buy a present costing twice as much as the tip, and sent it to the old gentleman with my compliments.

When we arrived in India, strong rumours were afloat that war with Afghanistan was imminent ; that an ultimatum had been sent to the Amir ; yet nothing certain was known. Nevertheless our friends advised us to lose no time in joining our regiments, especially those which lay at Peshawar, the very forefront of the coming campaign. In those days the railway was only constructed as far north as Jhelum ; thence to Peshawar, 180 miles of road had to be negotiated, in some sort of horse-drawn conveyance. The acknowledged means of transit then was a *dâk gharry*, a sort of large packing-case on wheels, drawn by two ponies. Inside this two people could spread their beds, and slumber, or lie awake, through the many hours during which the machine rattled night and day. Every six or eight miles there was a change of ponies, and the start from each stage was like the start in a chariot race. Everyone shouted, and yelled, and cracked whips, and threw stones, and pushed and shoved ; till finally, with a wild plunge, off dashed into the darkness the fiery mustangs drawing the chariot. On the top of the *dâk gharry* was piled the passengers' luggage, and in the crevices between these trunks and bundles squatted and slept the passengers' servants.

Arrived at Jhelum, we found that the whole passenger service had been taken over by the military authorities, and as its carrying capacity was very limited there was a heavy block. On reporting our arrival to the Staff Officer, and applying for passage, we were informed that his orders were to send on officers strictly according to seniority. As we were mere cadets from Sandhurst, without any seniority at all, this looked very like settling down at Jhelum for the rest of our natural lives. We did indeed sit for two endless days and nights in the Dâk Bungalow, and then an Angel appeared. It took the form of an Officer of the 9th Lancers, and came in at 9 p.m., and said : " I say, young feller-me-lad, if you don't mind a dam' cold ride, and no baggage, I'll take you on top of my gharry, instead of my servant." Did I mind a cold ride and no baggage? What a frightfully superfluous question! Any one would have gone in bathing drawers and slippers, and the thermometer below zero, rather than miss such a chance. But wasn't he a noble fellow? Fancy starting off on a campaign, and leaving your only servant behind, just to oblige an ugly boy from Sandhurst!

With the cheerful inconsequence of youth, and without another thought, I cast the whole of my kit, tentage and equipage to the winds, and in five minutes had usurped the place of Ram Bux on top of a portmanteau, on the roof of my splendid friend's *dâk gharry*. A wild blast on the driver's bugle, a clatter and a dash, and the crack of a whip, a heavy lurch and another, a perilous surge out of the gate, and we were off at full gallop up the road to Peshawar.

It may be confessed now that it was one of the coldest drives experienced in a long, and at times very cold and chequered career. Only those whose pastime it is to search for the North Pole can quite

appreciate the piercing cold of a Punjab winter night. And when one is rushing through that winter night perched on a pile of luggage, at a break-neck pace, with only a thin rug as a mild defence, one begins to appreciate what the Chinese "No. 1 torture by cold" must be like.

One tried to squeeze down between two boxes, but they were too tightly packed. One tried to smoke a pipe, and could not for the wind. Sleep one could not for the cold, as well as from an imminent fear of being shot off from an insecure perch. All that could be done to pass the time and keep from freezing, was to jump down at each stage and help to harness the horses, help to push and shout and start the team, and then, catching on behind, to make a wild scramble for one's perch on the roof. At the age of eighteen there is fun and excitement enough even in such simple pleasures as these.

As day dawned and the sun arose, one began to thaw a bit, and shortly after we passed the 11th Bengal Lancers marching to the front. It was the first Indian regiment I had seen, and what splendid fellows they looked, and how one envied the easy swagger with which a young fellow, not much older than myself, rode at the head of one of the squadrons! They did not fail to notice me too, and were obviously enormously tickled at the young Officer, his costume, and mode of travelling. There was a second night like the last, but at midday on the second day we joyfully drove into Peshawar.

"Well, what news? Is there to be a war? When does it begin? Who is going?" and a dozen more questions were fired at everyone, and anyone, in uniform. Nobody apparently knew anything definitely, but all were more, or less, full of unreliable information.

"Better run out and join your regiment, young-

ster," said my 9th Lancer Trojan; "they are encamped about five miles out towards the Khyber Pass, and there you will get in touch with what is going on." And so we parted, never to meet again, for the good God, who takes all brave warriors into His keeping, took him. May he rest in peace! And none the less for having been kind to a friendless boy.

Having had a wash and a shave, and borrowed a shirt and a collar, and the use of a brush and comb, we hired a conveyance, locally known as a "tum-tum,"—one wondered why—and pricked forth to find the regiment.

About five miles out towards the Khyber Pass we entered a big camp, and were beginning to wander in our quest, when we came across a large tent.

A pleasant-looking officer in "khaki" was smoking a cigar near the tent, and to him we addressed ourselves.

"Can you very kindly tell us where the 17th are encamped?"

"Yes I can," he replied with great alacrity; "that's a conundrum I really can answer. You are standing bang in the middle of their camp now!"

"Thank you very much, sir, we have come to join."

"Have you indeed? That's splendid! And what's your name, and yours? We were expecting a batch of youngsters—'warts' you are called, you know. Come along in, have some lunch. Welcome to the old 17th."

We were led into a tent full of officers at lunch, first introduced to the Colonel, and then all round; and every officer got up and shook us warmly by the hand, and said how glad they were to see us. It was indeed a warm and happy feeling to be taken straight, a poor dishevelled stranger, into the heart



of that gallant regiment three hundred years old. They had nice manners in the Army in those days—and have still, for that matter, in good regiments.

“Here is a place next me, youngster,” said a grizzled old veteran with Crimean medals, “and as I am your skipper you must come and lunch with me. And opposite is your brother subaltern in our Company; he’s got seventeen years’ service, so there’s a bit of a gap between you!”

My skipper himself had twenty-six years’ service, and had been a Captain since the Crimean War. The Colonel had commanded the regiment for over twenty years; the Adjutant, the smartest of the smart, was a young subaltern of fourteen years’ service, and the men were mostly twenty-one years’ service men. At the time I said in my heart, may I never see a smarter, or finer regiment, than this old 17th Foot. But I did, for that same regiment served under me nearly forty years later in Mesopotamia, and was, if possible, braver and better than it had ever been.

In the midst of lunch, someone said: “You are just in time, youngsters, we are starting at four o’clock this afternoon.”

“Starting where?” we asked.

“Haven’t you heard? The time of grace allowed the Amir expires at 4 o’clock to-day, and we start then to take the Khyber Pass, and storm Ali-Musjid.”

That scene and moment have often since come back to memory, and often since has one wondered at, and envied, the bright optimism of early youth. It is hardly an everyday occurrence for anyone to travel 6000 miles, and arriving in time for lunch, to discover incidentally in the course of conversation that one is expected to take part in a bloody battle, shortly after the completion of the meal!

“Hurrah! . . . but I’ve got no clothes!” for

indeed my sole sartorial possessions were a travel-soiled tweed suit, and a white sun helmet.

"Oh! we'll find you clothes," exclaimed half a dozen; "don't fret about that."

And so they did. One produced a "khaki" coat, another a pair of trousers, and a third a pair of puttees. The Sergeant-Major lent me a sword-belt, and the Quartermaster produced a sword; whilst my skipper's batman deftly ran up a khaki bag to cover my dazzling helmet.

"We can't afford to lose you our first day," said the old Colonel, patting me kindly on the back.

And so the lunch party broke up, as gay as gay. True knights and British Officers, walking brave and debonair, maybe towards glory, and maybe towards the pleasant fields of Heaven, where warriors rest.

## CHAPTER III

### THE KHYBER PASS

Storming Ali-Musjid—The Repulse—Turning Movement of 2nd Brigade—A Midnight March—A Frosty Night—Adventures with a *Dhooly*—Sugar for a Pillow—On Again at Dawn—Thomas Ananias—His Goodness—Great Toil in a Blazing Sun—Another Cold Night 7000 Feet Up—Seventeen Sheep—Their Tragic Fate—The Boom of the Guns—The Enemy Cut Off—Surrenders—The Solitary Horseman—Enlists in The Guides Cavalry—Pathan Honour—Ali Gul, Subadar—His Home in Tirah—How to Get There—By Subtlety he Succeeds—His Return—That Subadar of the 26th Punjabis—The Vendetta—A Truce in British Territory—Two Soldiers of the King—Twelve Corpses Ahead—Death of Ali Gul—His Son—His Youthful Prowess—Enlisted in The Guides

**H**OW the first attack on Ali-Musjid, on November 20th, 1878, was beaten back with bloody slaughter, and how after a night and a day that Fort, the key of the Khyber Pass, was taken, is written broad in the history of the Empire. In that decisive victory the 2nd Brigade bore no mean part, in fact it went far towards turning the tide of victory. For by a most arduous night march through stupendous mountains it dropped down on the rear of the Afghans and completed their discomfiture. The Brigade consisted of the 17th Foot, The Guides, and the 1st Sikhs, under command of General Tytler, a fine old General of the best type. Little did I, the last-joined subaltern, think that I should one day command The Guides, still less did the dream occur of commanding, in the Great War, nearly forty years later, a Brigade in which both the 17th Foot and the 1st Sikhs<sup>1</sup> would be included.

<sup>1</sup> Now the 51st Sikhs of immortal memory.

At 4 p.m. on a cold bright evening the 2nd Brigade pushed off on its venture ; at first across the level stony plain ; then into the foothills ; and as night fell, up the great mountain gorges. Here all semblance of a road disappeared, and a single file track, chiefly used by goats, led ever upward. Along this track for miles the brigade extended, worming its way steadily along. But oh ! the weariness of it, especially on a night dark, dark, dark—darker than the inside of a cow, as they say. Plodding along half asleep one suddenly loses the man in front, a dash on to catch him ends abruptly five yards ahead on the muzzle of a rifle. Then another long stand, first on one leg, then on the other, till the column begins to stir again. Then a few more steps forward, then another halt ; then another spasmodic burst after a lost leader ; and then the whole thing over again.

The march thus continued till midnight, and by that time most of us had perhaps had enough of it. Here we found a small basin in the mountains ; the brigade was formed up in it, picquets posted, and all lay down where they were to pass the time as best they could till dawn. We were now about 5000 feet up, midwinter in the Afghan mountains, and the cold was intense ; so much so that most of us spent the night prowling about to try and keep warm.

In the course of one of these excursions I stumbled across a queer-looking object which on closer inspection proved to be a *dhooly*—that is to say, an ambulance litter, with curtains all round. On cautiously peering in I discovered a very comfortable looking bed with several blankets and a pillow. Here was, in absence of sick and wounded, manifestly wicked waste of the more decent essentials of existence on a freezing night, and seemed more pronouncedly so in the midst of an ice-bound brigade. I therefore promptly decided that those

blankets and that pillow should no longer feel shunned, and neglected, and short of a bedfellow. In two seconds, or less, I was securely ensconced and already fast asleep in this comfortable nest.

Whether that sleep lasted for a few hours or only a few minutes, or merely a matter of seconds, is not quite clear. But what is perfectly clear is that in my distant dreams I felt myself being severely kicked, whilst seemingly a far off, very hearty voice, with a rich Irish brogue, was enquiring: "What the blank, blank, blankety blank d'ye mean by getting into a hospital bed, meant only for the sick and wounded, no less!" The subaltern muttered sleepily and inconsequently: "Thanks very much, ole chap," and went off again into a death-like slumber for several hours, or it may be seconds. When he really did wake up he was on the ground outside the *dhooly*, and the brogue was in his late warm bed. But anyway he was a kindly brogue, and was saying: "Well, annyhow, sonny, here's one o' me blankets for ye, and there's a bag o' medical comforts for ye pillow." The bag of medical comforts proved to be a bag of brown sugar, and not too hard at that, and the blanket was a blanket and a godsend. So there under the lee of the doctor's *dhooly* the last-joined subaltern slept his first night under the frosty stars.

Before dawn hot tea, without milk, but the most delicious ever tasted, was served out in tin mugs, and off we went again. Stumble, bang, halt, run on, bang, halt, crawl, in varying sequence, till the light strengthened, and then on once more steadily and quickly. About 9 o'clock one began to feel as if one had not had a single meal for several years, and in reality had not for upwards of eighteen hours' steady marching. But there are a wonderful number of kind people in this world, and soldiers and sailors are the kindest of all.



"Beg pardon, sir, but 'ere's a couple of 'ard boils ; I ain't no use for 'em," muttered a hardened old Thomas Ananias, with a beard and Crimean medals, pressing a couple of eggs into my hand.

"I got more 'ard tack than I knows 'ow to carry," added a second benevolent descendant of the same patriarch, thrusting a square biscuit on me in a surreptitious manner. And so I ate and was thankful, and blessed the kind hearts of my dear friends, privates of the Line. It perhaps added a welcome glamour to the feast that I had left a small flask of brandy and three cigars, and these we three shared.

All that day we plodded on in a blazing sun, which made a queer contrast to the deadly cold of the night before, and promoted a most unhallowed thirst with little to assuage it. At dusk we halted, wet through to our outer coats with perspiration, 7000 feet up in the mountains, freezing hard, with a bitter wind blowing, and with no food, or great-coats. At this extremely appropriate moment The Guides captured a flock of sheep and sent along seventeen, the regimental number, to us. In the space of a very few minutes these had been killed, skinned, divided up, and were simmering on ram-rods, or toasting on bayonets. The toughness of this form of diet passes belief, but anyway it is something to chew, and heartens one up quite a lot.

Then followed another desperately cold night, with a biting wind, and the thermometer falling out of the bottom of itself. A little disturbed sleep there was, but mostly a weary tramp about the bivouac to keep warm. In fact we rather envied the Orderly Officers who had to trudge round the picquets and sentries all night ; they at any rate had an object for their walk. Next morning another glorious pannikin of tea, and then off again on our tramp.

And now at length, after two nights and a day, we were to gather in the fruits of our labours. Far away we could hear the deep boom of guns ; at first faintly, and then more clearly, the fierce rattle of rifle fire. Everyone brightened up wonderfully. The Guides, as was their wont, dashed eagerly on, and we followed at our best pace. One last effort, and we found ourselves dropping down into the frowning gorges of the Khyber Pass, and had our first view of the battle.

The Fort of Ali-Musjid stands on a precipitous rock completely barring passage through the Khyber Pass from the direction of India. In days of old it was held to be impregnable, for neither firearms nor cannon could range far enough, or hit hard enough, to injure it. Even in 1878 its defences were proof against any gun, or rifle fire, we had to bring against it. Shells from our batteries simply hit the rock and rolled back into the bed of the Pass, rifle bullets merely spluttered against stone walls. To scale the place for assault was like unto scaling St. Paul's Cathedral, only twice that height. Gun fire was tried, rifle was tried, and finally an assault was ordered. But all failed to shake, or move, the Afghan defenders. Thus it was that when night fell the remnants of the British attacking columns lay plastered against the face of the sheer rock, half-way up, and unable to advance, or retire.

But the arrival of the 2nd Brigade, after its arduous detour, altered all this ; for an Afghan, or indeed any Asiatic, has an exceedingly delicate feeling for his rear. "Perchance I shall be bitten behind," is what he thinks, and immediately looks around for a means of escape. There were two means of escape, one over the mountains through the land of the Afridis, and another along the bed of the Khyber Pass. Both were fraught with undesirable dangers, but either was held preferable

to being slaughtered in front, and rear, at the self-same moment. So a general retreat was ordered, and some went one way, and some the other. Those who trusted to the hospitality of the Afridis, counting them as allies and co-religionists against the Unbelievers, fared scantily, for they were robbed of their arms and clothing and then allowed to escape, thus meagrely clad, into their own country. Those who chose the Pass route had to count with the 2nd Brigade.

By this time The Guides and 1st Sikhs held strong positions astride of the Pass, whilst the 17th Foot stood in reserve. Into this *cul-de-sac* marched the Afghan infantry, and the action was short, sharp, and decisive. Practically the whole force was killed, wounded, or captured; one squadron of cavalry alone managing to charge through, leaving however many casualties in horses and men. For those were days before machine guns were invented, and the infantry rifle a single loader, not accurate much over 400 yards. The old Snider was, however, a smasher when it did hit, and cushy wounds were rare as apricots in April.

Slowly following the Afghan cavalry appeared a solitary horseman, with his sword drawn, and riding at his leisure. He came perfectly undisturbed through a tornado of bullets, merely waving his sword in defiance at those periods when it became hottest. Probably a thousand men had a shot at that solitary figure, but he rode on undismayed and untouched. Here was a brave man indeed! By order of the Colonel of The Guides the bugles blared out the "cease fire," and as the call echoed through the mountains there succeeded a dead calm. A child's voice might have been heard. The horseman rode on calmly, till a voice hailed him:

"Who art thou, O Warrior, and whence comest'

and whither goest ? The Commander of The Guides would have speech with thee."

" My name is ' Such-a-one,' I am a warrior of the sword, and fear no one. What sayest thy Master ? "

" He would speak with thee, as touching thy bravery. Fear not treachery, thy life is in the Sahib's keeping. Tether thy horse and come up and speak with the Colonel Sahib, the great warrior."

" I consent. The Sahibs are clean folk."

So up came " Such-a-one," and the parley between him and the Colonel of The Guides was short and to the point.

" By Jove ! you are a brave fellow ! "

" At your Honour's service."

" Will you enlist in The Guides ? I'll make you a Duffadar<sup>1</sup> straight away. Brave men are what I want."

" I accept your Honour's offer, with pleasure."

It brought one back to the days of long ago, when gallant knights went cruising about the world spoiling for a fight, it mattered little, seemingly, in what cause, or under whose banner. Fighting was what they were seeking ; and honour, and glory, and ladies' gloves.

And so it was with " Such-a-one."

Pathan Honour is a curious thing and can best be illustrated by relating the case of Ali Gul.

Ali Gul, Subadar, was one of the bravest men in The Guides. He had twice won the Order of Merit, the highest reward for valour then open to the Indian soldier, and would have won it a third time or perished in the attempt, had he been allowed to. This was on the way to Lhasa, when serving under my brother Frank. The Expedition had reached the Brahmaputra River, here 150 yards wide, and running deep and strong, with icy cold snow water.

<sup>1</sup> Sergeant.

The Thibetans had removed all available boat to the far bank, and the advance was at a deadlock. Seeing the dilemma, Ali Gul at once volunteered to swim across the river in face of the enemy, and bring back a boat. His Commanding Officer could not, however, spare so valuable a Native Officer for so desperate a venture, and forbade him to make the attempt. Whereupon two more men of The Guides at once stepped forward, and said that they would go. Of these one was drowned, or hit by a bullet, on the way across, and was never seen again; whilst the other, Sobat by name, succeeded in this desperate venture, and alone, naked and unarmed, cut out a boat from under the enemy's bank of the river, and brought it back. That was a well-earned Order of Merit.

This story, however, is not about Ali Gul's military career, but about Pathan Honour. One day in August a few years back, Ali Gul came, as the custom is, to pay his respects, and to say good-bye before he went on three months' leave to his home. His home being in Tirah, in the land of the Afridis. I wished him good-bye, and hoped he would have a pleasant holiday. With a half-sheepish and half-bashful air, he muttered something about "he hoped so too." Then shaking hands, and making a military salute, he gathered on his shoes at the door, in due sequence, and departed.

To my surprise, about a week after I saw him in the lines, and hailed him.

"Hullo! Ali Gul, what are you doing here? Why haven't you gone on leave?"

"Some business, Sahib, some urgent business has kept me," he said aloud. And then, as we strolled on, away from listeners, he added in a low murmur: "I couldn't get through, so came back."

"How do you mean, you couldn't get through? Why, it is your own country, and your own home."



"Without doubt, Sahib, but unfortunately I have many enemies in my own country; and though they dare not touch me, or molest me in the country of the British Government, yet the moment I set foot across the border I carry my life in my hands."

"That seems a singularly rotten state of affairs. Why don't you settle in British territory then?"

"Well, Sahib, I have often thought of doing so, but I have a good deal of land in Tirah, and many relations there, and I cannot manage it yet."

"What's going to happen now then? Are you giving up your leave?"

"No, Sahib, I have sent scouts round to see whether I can get to my home by another route."

"Well, may you be fortunate, and may your *Kismet* be good."

And we parted.

A few days after that Ali Gul had disappeared from the lines. So we concluded that he had managed to elude the vigilance of his enemies, and had reached his home.

At the end of three months I noticed Ali Gul at the Commanding Officer's bi-weekly durbar, and asked him to come up and see me at my house afterwards.

After the usual salutations, and the reiterated enquiries after each other's health, customary on these occasions, "Are you well?" "Are you quite well?" "Are you very well indeed?" "You are feeling quite strong?" had been worked through, I said:

"Well, Ali Gul, what sort of leave did you have? Enjoyed yourself? Had a good rest?"

"To tell the truth, Sahib, I did not have a very good time, or a good rest, for I was shut up all the time in my fortified tower."

"That is very sad; and what illness were you suffering from?"

"None at all, Sahib; but" (with a broad grin) "I should have suffered from a very bad one if I had put my face out of doors."

"How so?"

"Well, Sahib, it is like this. A Subadar of the 26th Punjabis and myself are deadly enemies. We have a blood feud. And most unfortunately his tower is only about two hundred yards away from mine, and the moment I show my face he has a shot at me. I also in my turn lose no opportunity of having a shot at that Subadar. Under these circumstances neither of us, nor any of our relations, could go out at all, so all our land lies uncultivated, and we were unable to sow our autumn crop."

"A Subadar of the 26th Punjabis!" I exclaimed. "Why, I have seen you and him at the same winter manœuvres, and even quartered together in the same cantonment, and apparently on quite friendly terms."

"That is so, your Honour. As long as we are under the British flag we sink our private feuds, and serve the King faithfully side by side. But when we go home across the border, there it is otherwise. There Pathan Honour has to be satisfied."

"Well, I must say you are a pair of donkeys. Here you are one day, and in one country, on perfectly friendly terms with each other; and on another day, in another country, not only try to kill each other, but bring ruin to each other's crops and cattle."

"That is so, Sahib, but it is Pathan Honour."

"Oh, rubbish!" said I. "Now look here, both you and the Subadar of the 26th Punjabis are good soldiers and excellent fellows, and have served the same King long and faithfully. Why not, like sensible fellows, make friends, and give up this highly idiotic feud?"

Ali Gul simply beamed on me with great warmth, and replied:

"That, Sahib, is exactly what I say. That is exactly the message I have frequently sent to that Subadar of the 26th Punjabis, through the medium of friends ; but he is an obstinate fellow, he will not consent."

"Well, I'll try and get hold of him and have a talk with him. I hate to see two fine fellows like you out against each other."

"Without doubt, your Honour. You speak words of great wisdom. There is, however, one obstacle in the way of a settlement. The Subadar of the 26th Punjabis says I am twelve corpses ahead of him ; and that he cannot make peace, because of Pathan Honour, till he is even with me."

"Twelve corpses ! What do you mean ?"

"It is thus true, Sahib," replied Ali Gul with great frankness, and an open and engaging smile. "I and my family have killed forty of his people, and he and his have killed only twenty-eight of mine, and so I am twelve corpses ahead of him. And it would not in the least matter if he, or I, or both, were killed ; our families would carry on the feud till one family or the other was wiped out, or at any rate till our scores were even."

I met the Subadar of the 26th Punjabis shortly after, for he was under my command in the Derajat, and had a talk with him about Ali Gul and their mutual feud.

"Yes," he said, "Ali Gul is a splendid fellow, and a great warrior, and a deadly shot, and I would like much to end the feud ; yet Pathan Honour forbids me to do so, till I am even with him."

But Ali Gul died in his bed after all, poor fellow, and not at the hands of the Subadar of the 26th Punjabis ! For one Christmas he sent word for me to come and see him in hospital, and when I came in he struggled up to a sitting position in his bed and gave the military salute, and with the same frank

smile, but not the same strong voice, he whispered : " The Subadar of the 26th Punjabis hasn't killed me after all," and sank back on his pillow. That night he died of pneumonia.

But before we leave Ali Gul, the bravest of the brave, let me tell you a story about his son.

Ali Gul was himself a great stalwart fellow, over six feet in height, and hard as nails all over. When men are candidates for enlistment into The Guides it is customary for their relations, or friends, in the regiment to bring them up in open durbar for the Colonel's approval. The Colonel then tells them to strip, and looks them over, and if he approves, sends them to the doctor to be " vetted," as it is colloquially called. Usually, however, a Native Officer, if he is bringing up a friend, or relation, and much more so a son, will very usually take an opportunity of showing the candidate privately beforehand to the Colonel, at his bungalow ; so that he may not incur the shame, as he calls it, of having his man rejected in public.

I have known men of the best blood in Asia, Princes of the blood Royal, commence their military career as plain troopers in The Guides Cavalry. When I joined there were two, one Shahzada (that is, son of a king) Taimus, and the other Shahzada Jehangir. One was a trooper, and the other had just worked up to a commission. Both were of royal blood in the dynasties of Afghanistan. In later years the Prince of Bokhara joined as a trooper, but died before he was given a commission. Amongst the troopers was to be seen, as keen and eager as any, a young landlord with rich territories whose rent-roll might be anything up to £20,000 a year.

One day at durbar, Ali Gul appeared with what we thought rather a weak and undersized youth, and when other business was over put him forward

amongst the other recruits for inspection, announcing that he was his son. Everyone looked at the Colonel, and then at the lad, for he was manifestly not up to the standard of The Guides in physique and general appearance.

"Quite so, quite so, Ali Gul, a nice boy, I am sure. Bring him up to my house after, and we'll have a talk about him."

But Ali Gul was not to be put off.

"I know, Sahib," he proceeded with great bluntness, "what is in your Honour's mind. You think he is not good enough for The Guides."

"Well, well, I won't say that exactly, but perhaps in another year, and with lots of good food, he would fill out and become a man like his father. Anyway, I won't look at him now, bring him up to my house later."

"I thought so, your Honour, you don't think him good enough for you. Now let me tell you a little story. The lad is only seventeen years old, and the other day he and another lad were working their way home from the Khyber Pass into Tirah. Each of them had a Martini-Henri carbine, which, as your Honour knows, fires black powder and makes great smoke. As the two boys were going along they were attacked by three of my enemies, full-grown men with beards, and each armed with a Lee-Metford rifle firing smokeless powder. Well, they had a regular fight these five, and my boy shot two of the enemy and brought away their rifles. Now, is he good enough for you or not?" And the proud father looked first at the Colonel and then round the assembled durbar.

"Good enough for me, Ali Gul? Yes, certainly he is. He is enlisted from this moment."

"Shahbash!" said everyone solemnly.



## CHAPTER IV

### A SUBALTERN'S FIRST BATTLE

One in Six are Fighting Men—The Soldier's Medal—A Boy in his First Battle—Réveillé—The Colour-Sergeant—Cavalry and Horse Artillery Move Off—Enemy's Counter-Attack—Arrival of Infantry—First Casualties—David and Goliath—A Drama in Seconds—"The Cavalry! The Cavalry!"—The Guides Charge—The 10th Hussars Charge—The Pursuit—Victory—And After—A Cavalry Subaltern—His First Experience—A Deadly Ordeal—The War-Horse in the Bible—Manœuvring for Position—Charged by a Lancer—A Collision—Saved by a Sowar—The Trumpeter's White Horse—Charging with Long Hair Streaming in the Wind—Single Engagements—The Rally—Back to Camp—Cheered by the Infantry—"The Green Curve"

**N**OWADAYS a good many people have been in battle, though not quite so many as are imagined. For it is a curious and concrete fact that five out of every six men we meet in uniform, and even decorated with medals, have never seen a shot fired, or been in any great danger of their lives, from the shot or shell of the enemy. It is only the one man out of six who has really been through the fiery furnace, and he perchance very often.

It may surprise some people to hear that great muscular fellows who would be a credit to the Grenadier Guards, of set and deliberate purpose enlist in corps where the risks of battle are remote. These fine fellows not infrequently exhibit, by right, quite an imposing row of medals, and amongst their female friends possibly pass as the fiercest of warriors. This is one of the sore points in the Army; there is little to distinguish between the

fighting soldier and the soldier who has never fought, and has no intention whatever of fighting.

What we of the fighting line think is that no man should wear a medal, or medals, except such as are earned on the battlefield, and in actual contact with the enemy. There are numerous other, and more suitable, methods of rewarding or decorating those who help the Army in many other useful ways, but it seems to us old soldiers that there should be no mistake possible between the battle soldier, and those who assist from the rear.

It is a stock question, generally propounded at tea, or other inconvenient occasion, and not infrequently by an intense but highly well-meaning lady:

“How did you feel in your first battle?”

The much embarrassed subaltern will probably reply: “Oh! all right, thanks, have another bun,” and skilfully skates off any further allusions to his military career.

But in the quiet seclusion of these pages perhaps one out of many thousands may give a somewhat more detailed reply.

We had been in several “scrap,” as the soldier calls them—that is, mild skirmishes, night attacks, attacks on convoys, and the other small fry of campaigning—and thus were fairly familiar with the singing and swishing of a few occasional bullets, in or about our immediate vicinity. Yet we youngsters had not hitherto been in a stark and straight up-right battle, where two armies are facing each other and mean fighting. Not a sudden battle either, but one we know is going to take place next morning. Of the night before one’s chief recollection is that of praying with great earnestness, and now looking back on it, with a somewhat naive insistence, to be spared to live through the day, making perhaps a slight reservation in favour of a glorious, but not

fatal, wound. It seemed such a pity to the interested person, and indeed it is, that a boy of eighteen should be gathered to his fathers ; and I am not sure that this point of view was not brought to the notice of the Almighty !

Thus at peace with ourselves and all the world, we slept as sound as ever man, or boy, slept, and I personally was dreaming just before dawn of a singularly enticing and desperate football match, when eight buglers standing in a row and blowing the “ Réveillé ” brought us back to soldiering, and the matter in hand. Those, you will notice, were days before a bugle, or trumpet, on service was looked on as a deadly snare.

We had all slept in our clothes, and boots, and belts, so that the morning toilet consisted merely of getting up, having a stretch, and putting on a much squashed helmet which had been used as a pillow during the night. There was burning close by a rather enticing fire, and on it sat a still more enticing cauldron. Out of this, Hebe, disguised as our Colour-Sergeant, shortly extracted tin mugs of hot tea, and presented them to us.

“ Take that, sir, it’ll warm ye up.” And so it did, bless him ! He was the kindest fellow on earth, that Colour-Sergeant ; old enough to be our father, he always watched over us, in or out of action, as if our precious lives were specially entrusted to his stalwart keeping. Perhaps they were.

Soon after daylight we saw the Cavalry, followed by the Horse Artillery, moving off, whilst we of the Infantry Brigade also fell in, and received our preliminary orders. The enemy held a line of low ridges about a couple of miles away, and as the light strengthened his standards could be seen fluttering clear along the crest line. The Horse Artillery were to shell this crest whilst the Cavalry moved away to a flank, and the Infantry made a frontal attack

so as to drive the enemy into the Cavalry net. The battle commenced as intended, but did not continue quite so. For the enemy, being not much hurt or intimidated by the shell fire, conceived the inconvenient notion of charging down and capturing our guns before the Infantry could arrive.

Once an Afghan horde is set going in one of these mad charges, it takes a good deal to stop it. Consequently, when the Infantry came up we found a very critical state of affairs. The guns, run back by hand and firing reversed shrapnel; the Cavalry unable to get home an effective charge owing to a deep nullah which ran between us and the enemy; the enemy yelling and shouting words of abuse and contempt, and steadily advancing, firing heavily all the while. We were now well into our first battle, and to tell the honest truth, I don't remember thinking about anything in particular, or out of the way.

There were certainly a great number of bullets swishing past, over, under, and on each side, but the thought did not in the least occur that there was anything particularly personal about them. Perhaps, though young in years, we had got intuitively the real hang of it, and grasped the fact that these swishing bullets had long since passed over, or to one side. The first man knocked over was a private in our Company, but there was nothing in the least gruesome or dispiriting about it. On the contrary, to hear his cheery :

"I'm all right, sir, till the doctor comes up. Thankee, sir, I'll just take a pipeful," made it seem like an exciting game.

A few steps on Malony, the comedian and horn-pipe dancer, went down without a sound, but he did not look dead somehow, only sleeping.

The arrival of the Infantry steadied matters a bit, and as we formed line and advanced, firing, the

enemy hesitated, and then halted. We too now lay down to take breath, not many yards from our opponents, before fixing bayonets and charging. It was in this brief moment of respite that we lost a brother subaltern, and lately my tent comrade. We were all flattened down as close as we could, and I remember considering a stone the size of a cocoa-nut, which was my only shelter, a somewhat meagre defence against a Snider bullet. Then suddenly to our right front occurred a drama in seconds.

A very small officer appeared sprinting as hard as he could, and all alone, straight for a huge giant who, standard in hand, was leading on a knot of Afghans. The little Englishman was not unlike David attacking Goliath, but his only weapon was a very diminutive and light tailor-made sword, such as an officer wears at State Balls, or Levees. With this child's weapon he dashed straight at the giant and ran him through the stomach up to the hilt. Then we saw him in difficulties, tugging to get his sword out. This all happened in a flash, and in another flash all those lying handy were up and after him at their best speed. How we raced across that rock-strewn strip, not more than fifty yards or so ! The men fixed bayonets as they ran, and were yelling like fury in English and any language, abuse, oaths, threats. Anything to stay the drama for one moment. In the next we were into them in a wild mêlée ; hitting, thrusting, cursing, kicking, throwing stones, clubbing rifles, firing pistols. The devil's own delight !

But alas ! and for ever alas ! too late ! In those brief seconds, whilst trying to withdraw his sword, our comrade was cut to pieces, and lay dead on the ground.

Where we had hit it the enemy's line caved in, which was not to be wondered at, for we had hit it hard. But to our surprise we saw not only the few



dozens, or few hundreds, before us begin to fall back, but a sort of panic seemed to be seizing the rest, and echoing faintly down the line we heard the dread cry : " Risalla ! Risalla ! " " The Cavalry ! The Cavalry ! "

Looking along to our right we saw a brave sight, the bravest possible—a body of Cavalry charging. It was none other than the renowned Cavalry of The Guides, which by a wonderful effort had crossed the seemingly impassable nullah, and was now falling with dauntless fury on ten times their numbers of the enemy. They whirled past us, and we, cheering like mad, dashed after them.

It is a splendid sight, such as no other perhaps equals, the wild charge of horsemen. Each man going for all he is worth, yelling to Allah, or other deity, to help him ; yelling curses the most blood-curdling on his enemy ; low bent so as almost to be lying along his horse's neck, and swish after swish, bringing his keen curved sword on to the head, or neck, or back, of a flying enemy.

No time here for quarter, given or taken. The pursued, when overtaken, stops, turns, fires point-blank at his pursuer, or slashes at him with his long knife, and next instant either escapes unscathed, or goes down like a blade of corn. These were separate single combats, but here and there were little miniature battles, where clumps of the enemy had got together, and where clumps of The Guides were attacking them. These seemed always tough knots, and we could see many a horse and man go down before the knot was cut.

Then came the 10th Hussars, charging in more regular fashion, and doing bravely their share of the pursuit. Next, with a rattle and clatter and bang, up came the Horse Artillery, and began planting shells amongst the larger and more distant groups, and these too now began to melt away ; and soon

the whole plain behind the ridge was covered with flying figures.

Flying much too fast for us on foot to catch them, but the sun still glittered on the blades of the Cavalry as they hunted on, till at last man and horse could do no more. The sword arm was weary, and could no longer rise to strike ; and the horse, ready to drop with fatigue, could barely be urged out of a walk. The Cavalry had shot its bolt, and four hundred of the enemy, killed with the sword, lay along that stricken line of flight.

And so ended our first battle, a day full of adventure, with some honour and not a little glory ; more exciting than any of our schoolboy games. Even the long, weary march back to camp failed to freeze the tingle down, and it was only late at night when, dog-tired, stumbling into the tent and lighting the lantern, we noticed one little camp bed empty, never to be filled again.

Such is the experience of an Infantry subaltern in his first battle, but that of the Cavalry subaltern is perhaps even more exciting.

A Cavalry charge is a Cavalry charge, and there is nothing on earth to equal it. Bayonet charges are all very well in their way, and Artillery tornadoes are most inspiring, especially if it is our own Artillery shooting. But the whirlwind charge of Cavalry lifts the soldier's soul above all things.

There were only two British Officers with the squadron, the Captain and the subaltern, and in the course of a fairly sanguinary battle they had been sent out to watch a flank with orders to charge when they saw a chance of doing so effectively. All the first part was deadly slow, very cold, and distinctly dangerous ; in a nerve-trying, cold-blooded, beastly way. They were told not to dismount, but just to keep cruising about ; to show themselves as much as possible, a sort of moving

menace. Of course, it is evident what that means. It means that the more you show yourself, the more every infernal fellow shoots at you. And a squadron of Cavalry mounted is a fairly big and apparent target at the best of times, even against inaccurate short-range weapons. The squadron therefore lost quite a lot of men and horses during that slow patrolling up and down.

"Troops right about wheel." "Forward."  
 "Troops left about wheel." "Forward." Backwards and forwards for an hour or more—it seemed more like a year to the squadron,—and then went another squish, thud, and down went another horse, or man. There were thirty-eight casualties, men and horses, during that deadly and eternal promenade.

You can imagine then with what joy they saw a Staff Officer, lying low down on his horse's neck, and sprinting for them, as if finishing for the Gold Cup at Ascot. He did not stop long either, he just said: "You can charge now," and, wheeling round, sprinted back to the haven behind the hill. That is the most joyous moment for the Cavalry soldier, to be let loose in a glorious charge! The subaltern had as a charger a very sporting little bay Arab, full of blood, very quick and handy, and not to be daunted by anything. Like the war-horse in the Bible, he had been sniffing the battle from afar, and had been stepping about on the very tips of his toes, with his head in the air, nostrils wide open, snorting again and again, and again and again giving short excited squeals. His tail arched up and cocked to one side, as only can a high-caste Arab. Every time the troops wheeled about he gave a hilarious dash round, as much as to say, "Now we're off, anyhow!"

The moment that Staff Officer came in sight he spotted him, and he knew exactly what he was coming for, and understood exactly what he said,

for he gave a wriggle and a squeak of joy. That Arab's name was "Mars," and he was the joy of his owner's life. His first charger, and in his eyes perfection ; never was there such a horse before, or since. Extraordinarily good friends they were, those two, horse and man who went out to battle together, for the master used to sit by the hour by his horse to see him groomed and fed, and always had a carrot, or something sweet in his pocket for him. The rascal knew this, and often at odd times, on picquet or elsewhere, would poke about his master's pockets for a scrap.

"Right wheel into line." "Trot." Came from the Captain. But "Mars" was much too excited to trot, and was dancing about like a sportive kid, reaching at his bridle, and throwing his mane and tail about in the most profligate manner. Meanwhile the Captain with his trumpeter had galloped on to look over a rise in the ground which the squadron was approaching. It was the subaltern's job to stay with the squadron and watch his Captain and interpret the signals which he made, and in accordance with these to manœuvre the squadron into place. The Captain just peeped over the ridge and blew softly on his whistle to catch the subaltern's eye ; then signalled for troops to wheel to the right, and move further down the valley. The Captain and his trumpeter walked slowly along just below the sky-line, and the subaltern dropped behind the squadron to watch him, and take his signals. When the squadron had trotted a few hundred yards the soft whistle was again heard, and the signal came, "Left wheel into line." At the same moment the Captain galloped smartly along, and just got into place in front of the squadron as it crested the rise.

At first glance it was rather difficult to make out what was happening in the stony plain beyond.



There appeared to be a confused mass of men and horses in the near distance, and further away some guns firing rapidly. A continuous crackle of rifle fire split the air on every side. Just in front and a little below was a body of the enemy's cavalry, moving at a good hard gallop straight at the squadron, but most of the men seemed to be looking behind them. Their leader then suddenly saw what he was up against, and sheered off to his left at his best pace, followed by his horsemen. Only one solitary horseman, armed with a twelve-foot lance, came straight at the squadron. He was charging at full gallop, leaning well down on his horse's neck, yelling like a fiend and brandishing his lance, as is the custom with the wild horsemen of the East, even when only tent pegging.

When he got fairly close, a hundred yards or so away, he steadied his lance, and could be seen now coming straight for the centre of our squadron. The squadron also was moving at a smart gallop towards the solitary horseman, who was evidently out to die.

Now some people are fond of deprecating the lance; they say it is heavy, unwieldy, and hampers a man. Quite so, but if you ever happen to be situated as were the British Officers at that moment, with no weapon of offence or defence but a poky little sword, perhaps you might take a different view. Of course, theoretically the gallant swordsman with one turn of the wrist thrusts the lance aside, and with another deft turn spits the rash lancer through the waistcoat or other vulnerable part. In practice, however, if the lancer means business, he will have two feet of lance through you before your turn comes. On the present occasion the subaltern did not exactly know what had happened till afterwards, his last clear impression being that of a tremendous crash in which he and



his horse and several other horses and men seemed to take part.

Then from very far away in distant halls he heard a voice say : " Not hurt, youngster ? " And some one else seemed to answer : " No, I am all right." Next the subaltern found himself rather mistily and without a sword clambering on to " Mars' " back. " Mars " was very dirty, mud and sweat combined, as if he had been rolling on the ground, which indeed he had. He was blowing too a good deal, but was now as eager as ever to be off. Apparently what had happened previous to the crash was this. A Sikh trooper in the ranks seeing the approaching peril, yelled out :

" Fear not, Sahib, I am present."

And so he was manfully and at the right moment, for dashing forward he got a little more than level with his Officer, and a horse's length or so to his right ; so that just before the wild lancer's weapon reached its goal, which was the subaltern's chest, the Sikh caught him at an angle, man and horse, on his disengaged bow. When three horses, and three riders, thus meet at speed there is naturally a holocaust on the ground, and over this those who cannot elude it also stumble and fall. Thus there was a pretty to-do of horses and men on top of the subaltern, and there is little wonder that he was a little dazed for a moment or two. Truth to tell, so was the enemy lancer, but the Sikh was all right, and as the lancer rose to his feet he was a dead man, or a prisoner. I think he chose to be a dead man, for he was, as I have said, out to die that day.

Meanwhile the squadron had gone on in pursuit, and the subaltern, with his friend the Sikh and one or two others who had involuntarily stayed behind, set off to pick it up. The men of the squadron were now scattered in pursuit over a broad stony plain ; some singly and some in couples, mostly couples.

and some in groups ; but right far ahead could be recognised the white horse of the Captain's trumpeter, and that meant the Captain. It was like a panorama, and when one saw a little figure drop in the plain one hardly realised it was a man killed, or badly wounded. Some of our men had lost their pugarees in the mêlée, and these were fearsome and awe-inspiring tragedians. A Sikh with hair, long as a woman's, streaming in the wind, bending low and hard forward, yelling like a fiend, and bringing his curved sword down on all and sundry with a soft whistling drawing cut, is like a demon of dark dreams. Occasionally to be seen were individuals, or knots of men, who stood at bay, and these cost some lives to the pursuers, and many wounds. Gradually and by hard riding the late arrivals made their way up to where the white horse marked the Captain's position, and when they got there they found everything, as the Captain expressed it, "pretty stony cold." The men, though greatly elated, were tired, so tired that only the strongest could still raise an arm to strike. The horses, in a muck sweat and greatly blown, could scarcely move out of a walk. Indeed, one Duffadar might be seen whose horse had literally come to a standstill, whilst he and a dismounted enemy were fiercely bandying words, as is the custom in the East, addressing to each other most scandalous remarks regarding the morals and general respectability of the other's female relations.

"Son of a pig, just wait till I catch thee !"

"Misbegotten offspring of an ape, thou art afraid ! Why not spur thy horse forward ?"

Wild endeavour on the part of the Duffadar to get his horse to move. First heels and spurs, then the flat of his sword. Each in turn and all together, brought to bear.

"Wilt thou surrender, son of a burnt father,

whose mother is no better than she ought to be ? If not, I will call one of my comrades to kill thee."

"To hell with thee and thy comrades, Kafirs and sons of Kafirs, I'll fight the \* \* \* \* \*

There is a whirl, and a rush, and a yell, and a crash ! A Sowar has dashed past. And as he passed, caught the last speaker fair in the chest, drove his lance clean through him, turned him a complete somersault, broke the lance short off, and disappeared into the dust beyond.

The Captain now ordered the trumpeter to sound the rally, and the men slowly collected. A very dishevelled and heated crowd. With smeared sword-blades, broken lances, lost head-dresses ; blood-stains on men, on horses, and on clothes. Horses wounded and dead beat, but still bravely holding up. Men in great spirits, recounting their exploits, and not noticing the chips, and slices, and grazes. The Captain's cross-belt had been cut in two across the back. A deft back-hander dealt a shade too late, but exactly when he could not remember.

Slowly the small remnant of a squadron wended its way back. And as good luck would have it, chanced across a stream, and a good drink, and a long drink, for horse and man. It was rather like going back, in cold blood, over a country one has hunted over in hot blood. The fences seem enormous ; the brooks little short of broad rivers ; the distance covered a day's march. Thus on the way back the soldier saw many an obstacle that looked impassable, many a sight which was gruesome and forbidding in cold blood ; it seemed, and was, a day's march that they had galloped. And in all the wide plain were dead everywhere, and a few limping men, and brave horses standing till they died.

As night began to close down they saw a column of Infantry coming out to meet them. A battalion

sent to find out what had become of them ; to see whether support was wanted. A British battalion it was ; and then much to the surprise of the Cavalry, for the doers of great deeds often little appreciate their own heroism, a great British cheer broke forth, and the Officers came up, and shook the Captain warmly by the hand, and said :

“ Well done, old chap, it was splendid ! ”

The first battle of some subalterns is during a siege, either great or small. He may be one of a large force shut up in a beleaguered town, or he may be alone or with one other Officer besieged in an isolated post. He may be in an entrenchment receiving an attack ; or it may be “ over the top ” and a charge at the enemy’s entrenchments. But whichever it is, the British subaltern is himself, a brave and true English gentleman.

One I remember was chiefly concerned with the loss of half a biscuit which he had left at the last halt, and another slept peacefully till the moment of attack came.

The story of “ The Green Curve ” gives in delightful form the story of a minor siege, and Chitral, Ladysmith, and Mafeking stand out as historic cases of successful defences.

## CHAPTER V

### "JUDY" AND OTHER DOGS

Birth and Parentage—A Pup's Tail for a Bottle of Beer—"Made me 'Op and Yell"—A 200 Mile Trek—Cholera—"Judy" in Action—Her Fatal Bravery—A Wounded Officer—Redivivi Both—The Bobbery Pack—Under the Orange Tree—"Baz"—Nearly Ruins a Military Career—The Parting—Searching for Master—Died Fighting—"Patch"—At the Dog Show—Revenge Afterwards—Travels First-Class—"Patch" and "Phoongye"—Rival Drives—"Patch" no Joseph—"Potiphar"—"Romp"—Some Snake Stories

"JUDY" was my first dog, and I loved her dearly, more than all that have succeeded her. She was given me as quite a small puppy by the Captain of my Company, and made a long and adventurous journey to join us. But then all her life was adventurous. We were away upon active service in Afghanistan when she was born in Murree. Her parentage was high for those days, though high or low it didn't matter to me; she was my dog, and I didn't really care twopence about her pedigree, except in so much as it enhanced her merits in the eyes of other dogs and men and women. But her pedigree was high, nevertheless. Her father was a well-known and highly-distinguished fox-terrier belonging to "Bwab" of the 10th Hussars, that exceedingly popular and delightful person, Brabazon, then a subaltern, but now Sir John, and a distinguished General.

In those days a fox-terrier *was* a fox-terrier, and not a long-legged, long-nosed, no-forehead, cowardly sort of idiot that wins prizes at silly dog shows nowadays. A fox-terrier then was a short, square, dapper



little fellow, with high forehead and short nose ; as sharp as a needle, and plucky to the death, just standing on wire all the time ; and ready to dash in, and at, anything, big or small, like a shot. He was also small enough and plucky enough to bolt a fox, which is his real calling in life, as his name implies. “ Judy’s ” mother too was a pearl, a regular smart, dashing little dog.

One of the great things in those days was colouring. A fox-terrier to be really *crème de la crème*, in the very highest realms of subaltern admiration, must in the first instance have a perfectly evenly marked black-and-tan head, and also equally important, a black spot at the root of the tail. Which same tail had to be exactly four inches long, and must have been bitten off to that length, and not cut, when the fox-terrier was a tiny puppy. There was a soldier in my Company, who hied from Leicestershire, who was an acknowledged expert in this branch of canine law and operation. His fee was one bottle of Bass’s beer (not Murree, thank you, sir, kindly) per tail bitten off ; presumably to wash the taste away. And when there was a large litter he went away simply loaded with bottles. His procedure too was most professional.

“ Look ’ere, sir, just shut the bitch up, and bring the box of pups ” (a subaltern’s puppies always lived in an old wine case) “ along ’ere near the door. Just ’alf open it, and when I nods me ’ead just bang it ’ard. Lord bless their little ’earts, the slam gives them such a start they don’t notice I’ve bit off their tails same moment.”

The precaution about shutting up Mamma, he informed us, was most important.

“ A week come Tuesday,” he explained, “ I was nippin’ off a tail or two for the Major, and some’ow the bitch got loose without no one seein’ ’er, and just as the door banged, and I nipped the little

cuss's tail off, blarmee if the bitch didn't nail me through the calf. Nasty bite too, and made me 'op and yell, so I'm keerful now."

Bar unforeseen boomerangs of this description the whole seance was successful and unharrowing, and the small victims none the worse, and rarely even any the wiser. A little squeak perhaps ; and being then put back to Mamma, she licked the little stumps quite clean and well in a few minutes.

Besides even head marking and a spot on the root of the tail, it was also necessary, to be strictly correct, to have a small black spot on top of the head between the ears. The right shades of colouring ran from a light yellow over the eyes outwards to a shade of rich brown, and on outwards to inky and silky black. Both ears must be as black as night. Down the nose a white parting, starting very broad on the forehead and fining down to a thin white line at the nose. That article itself being coal-black.

"Judy" had not all these noble attributes, but she was an angel nevertheless.

To join us Mamma and daughter had to make a long march. First they went forty miles in an *ekka* from Murree to Rawal Pindi ; then from Rawal Pindi to Peshawar they travelled eighty miles in a bullock cart. And from Peshawar onwards, up to near the Jugdulluk Pass in Afghanistan, they had to walk nearly a hundred miles. At least "Judy's" Mamma walked, whilst "Judy" was carried by one of the men in his haversack.

"Judy" arrived just as the Peace of Gundamuk was signed, so she had to go all the way back again, and that summer we stayed at Landi-Kotal in the Khyber Pass, scourged with cholera, so that for five nights running we buried an officer, and in five nights forty men. But dogs do not, fortunately, get cholera ; nor did I, though I had a squeak or two.

"The moment you feel that way, young fellow,"

our old regimental doctor said to me, “just take a small wineglass of neat whisky or brandy, drop fifteen to thirty drops of chlorodyne into it, swallow off the stuff, and lie down quiet for a couple of hours. If that don’t cure you, send for me.” But it always did, and has many a time since.

Towards autumn the British Embassy at Kabul, under Sir Louis Cavagnari, was massacred. The war commenced again, so “Judy” and I again took the field, with varying fortunes, for another year. She was now pretty well grown, and went with me everywhere—in action or out of action, on outlying picquet, or in my snug little camp bed. Going round the sentries on outpost duty she was as good as a lantern on a dark night, for from sentry to sentry she would thread her way unerringly, a white spot about two yards ahead. When I was asleep no one was allowed to come near me, except one of my own soldiers, or my servant; anyone else was driven fiercely away. Like many a thoughtless subaltern, I had taught her to “go for niggers,” as we called it, and that was nearly the undoing of poor “Judy,” and I thought I had lost her for ever.

It happened like this. I was commanding part of the escort to a convoy which was being conducted through the Jugdulluk Pass towards Kabul, when fire was opened on one of our flanking parties, and shortly after a message came down that a subaltern in the 51st Foot had been shot, and asking for a dhooly to be sent up. Taking half a dozen men I went up too, riding the first part, which was easy going, on a black pony I had then, to see if any help was wanted. I had not gone far, however, when I found that the black pony was a sort of conspicuous Aunt Sally which everyone had a shot at. They missed him all right, but got me through the foot; a skiff only, just missing the ankle and going out through the bottom of my boot.

Leaving the black pony to be hustled down under cover again, I went on, and found my friend bleeding much, and looking pretty bad. A large bullet, probably a Snider, had hit him in the chest ; had apparently gone right through him, and made an enormous jagged hole where it came out at the back. We thought he was a gone coon, but making him as comfortable as possible in the dhooly we sent him down to the doctor. Then collecting our men we prepared to clear out the enemy. There were not very many of them, but they held a *sungar* on the summit of a ridge which commanded us, and effectually prevented the convoy proceeding along the Pass. All this time "Judy" was with me, greatly excited, and bustling about as if a rat hunt was going on.

Sending round a few men to the right and a few men to the left, we kept down the fire from the *sungar* till they had made good way, and then fixing bayonets we charged. Out went the Afghans, and off they fled with the speed and activity of mountain goats, and to my horror off went "Judy," 1000 miles an hour, after them. I yelled and whistled and roared, and even used abusive epithets, but those fluttering trouserings were too much for her. She was going to chase them out of my compound, anyhow. As the Afghans neared the crest of the next ridge a few hundred yards on, "Judy" closed on the rearmost, and we heard an angry shout of "Kuré, you dog!" and saw the man make a slash with his big knife. Then the whole crowd, "Judy" and all, disappeared over the crest line. With a bad foot I had had enough of running, and sent on some men to the next ridge, but when they got there not a living thing was in sight, neither man nor dog. And no amount of whistling or calling would raise the latter.

We were all greatly distressed. Her gallantry



had evidently been too great, and she had been cut down ; and I cursed my folly in having taught her to “ go for niggers.”

The convoy moved on, and I was glad to find my friend fairly easy, and neither dead nor dying as we had feared. Indeed, when we got into the next camp, and the doctors had a chance of probing the wound, they found that the bullet had run right round, and had done no fatal harm, and my friend eventually got quite well, and is alive to this day. Being young and foolish, and fearing I should be left behind, I said nothing about the scratch on my foot ; it didn't hurt, and only felt a little sore. That was an exceeding grievous mistake, for a bit of my sock or boot had been carried in, and a few days after it had become a serious matter, and took weeks to put straight.

Meanwhile poor “ Judy ” was mourned for as one dead, and I felt bitterly desolated at her loss, and missed her frightfully. It was nearly a fortnight after, and we were in Kabul, when one day a transport driver brought me a note. It was from an Officer many marches down the line of communications, who wrote that one morning when he woke up he found a little fox-terrier curled up on the foot of his bed. She was very thin and very footsore, and he had kept her and fed her, and now heard from one of my regiment that my dog was missing. To my great joy it proved to be the long lost “ Judy.” She had evidently hunted Afghans till she missed her way, and then eventually getting back to the Jugdulluk Pass, she had back-tracked us, vainly searching camp after camp down the line of communications.

I gave her a medal for that battle, and took the precaution to put my own name and regiment on the back.

After the best part of two years peace was finally



signed, and we cleared back to India. There "Judy" lived the usual cantonment life of a subaltern's dog. She hunted wild cats and pariah dogs, urged thereto by her master ; and on Sundays, as a treat, very often came in for a rat hunt as well. She was also a prominent member of the bobbery pack, which consisted mostly of fox-terriers and bull-terriers, with a greyhound or two thrown in. The pack went out on high days and holidays to hunt jackals ; first, however, settling up old scores amongst themselves.

It was also one of the duties of a subaltern's dog to have litters of puppies, and these, the result of careful mating, were distributed amongst the most cherished of one's friends, or given to a dog fancier amongst the men of one's Company.

India, though not a bad country for some classes of dogs, especially those with short coats, is rarely a long-lived country for any. The longest I have ever had a dog is six years, and poor "Judy" only lived till she was four. Then she got a chill, or something wrong inside, and gradually sank away. I sat up with her two nights, giving her spoonfuls of port wine and strong soup at intervals, but we could not pull her through. It was my first great grief, and I remember fairly blubbering as I sat on the ground, and carved her name and date on the trunk of an orange tree, beneath which she was buried, wrapped in my best rug.

Thirty-one years afterwards the orange tree and its inscription, still legible to me, stood in the garden of The Guides at Mardan.

Another dog that came to me was a greyhound named "Baz" from the colour of his eyes, which were those of a hawk called "Baz" in the East. He was the property of a brother Officer who died of wounds, and was sold by auction with his effects. "Baz" was knocked down to me for Rs.10, equal

in those days to ten shillings. He was a very fast and good dog, and slept on my bed, as do most subalterns' dogs. In fact, sometimes there is scarcely room for the subaltern at all.

"Baz," however, once very nearly ruined my military career. The General was down inspecting us, and being short of quarters a large tent was pitched for him in the mess compound, just outside my rooms. I noticed one day some small bits of coloured wool lying about the floor, but did not take much notice of them. A few days after the General had left, he wrote to the Colonel :

"DEAR JENKINS,

"Did I leave behind a pair of carpet slippers ? It is a pair made by a little niece of mine, and I prize them greatly."

The slippers could nowhere be found, nor had anyone seen them. On talking confidentially to "Baz" afterwards, it became apparent that he was the culprit who had stolen the slippers out of the General's tent, and some little friends of his, fox-terrier puppies, had torn them into small pieces and probably swallowed most of them.

On such slippery slopes does a military career rest.

After we had been together for three years and had become great friends, "Baz" and I had to part, for I was invalided home. He was left with a friend, but was quite inconsolable. First he roamed all over the cantonment searching for me, and every night went to my bed to see if I had returned. Then he thought in his faithful old doggy heart :

"The master must be at the outposts."

So out he went to the line of outposts, all of them over twelve miles, and one of them thirty-two miles distant. To each he went in turn and searched it carefully over. He said to each Post-Commander :

"How-de-do? But where's my master?"

Then he would have a drink of water, but no food, and plod on in his search.

At length, faint and weary and after many days, he turned back towards cantonments. As he neared it he passed a village where dwelt many of his enemies, great fierce pariah dogs. These in the days of his prosperity he treated with great disdain. They ran at the bare sight of him. But now, weak and thin and weary and worn, he was fair game. They bore down on him in a pack, bowled him over, and killed him there and then. Not sorry to die, perhaps, for earth was a poor place without old master.

All that we got back of poor old "Baz" was his collar, which a Sepoy, who was staying in the village, brought back.

"Patch" was another great character, who belonged to my brother Leslie. He was a rough-haired fox-terrier and a born fighter, which fights involved my brother in a constant round of visits of apology. He was a very intelligent dog, too. There was a Dog Show at Murree, and "Patch" was exhibited amongst the rough-haired terriers. But the judges did not fancy him, and he was one of the first turned out of the ring. This was a frightful insult, and "Patch" sat and watched the more favoured dogs, especially the prize-winners, with glowering eyes.

Next day after breakfast he said, "Now I am off for a bit of business." And, going systematically round to the houses where the successful competitors lived, he fought them all.

"You may wear a beastly old red or blue ribbon, but I'll jolly well show you which is the best dog," he remarked to each, and proceeded to do so.

At lunch he came home bleeding all over and with one ear nearly bitten off, but highly pleased with himself. That meant yet another round of apologies.

At one time my brother was stationed at Nowshera, about fifteen miles from us by train. When “ Patch ” got bored he would trot down to the station and hop into the train. Not into the dog-box, if you please, or even into a third-class carriage, but first-class, no less. And not in the wrong train either. There he would curl up under the seat, take no notice of the two intermediate stations, and jump out at Mardan. Then he would briskly trot to our house, which was a mile away, and arrive beaming.

Shortly after would come a tense wire from my brother Leslie :

“ Have you seen ‘ Patch ’ ? ”

And the answer would go back :

“ Yes, he is asleep on the drawing-room sofa.”

“ Patch ” once came to stay with us at Dera-Ismael-Khan, and we had a black Chow dog named “ Phoongye ” who was the apple of his mistress’s eye. “ Patch ” did not at all approve of “ Phoongye,” but he was a shrewd dog and liked his new home, especially on liver nights. So he kept off “ Phoongye,” only just sniffing occasionally.

We had a motor-car, and there not being room for two dogs in it and one of them “ Patch,” the mistress decided that only one should go out at a time, and being a kind, just mistress she gave no preference to “ Phoongye,” but took each in turn. “ Patch,” who loved driving in a car, soon discovered this, and made his plans accordingly. The motor-house was a good 150 yards away and behind the house, but “ Patch ” cultivated a preternatural sense of hearing. The moment the engine was started he would slip out, dash down to the stables, jump into the box-seat beside the chauffeur, and arrive at the front door sitting up in it, and saying as plain as words :

“ Now let’s see that damn black dog turn me out.”

The black dog did not, but his mistress did with great sternness, when it was not "Patch's" turn.

The Judge had a huge dog called "Potiphar," I believe because his wife had made a scandalous alliance elsewhere. "Patch" was no Joseph, but he loathed "Potiphar," and sought diligently for an opportunity of telling him so. *Tout vient à qui sait attendre*, and "Patch's" chance came when we were all busy talking after church. He went for "Potiphar" like a small tiger, but he had taken on too much this time, and would have been eaten alive if he had not been rescued.

Two years afterwards, at quite a different station several hundred miles away, "Patch" was walking down the Mall when suddenly he saw "Potiphar."

"What ho! my boy. You here?"

And went for him like a streak.

We had another dog named "Romp," a clumber spaniel, who was a great character. He was very greedy, as are most spaniels, and once ate a camel, or something of that size. With this inside him, and looking like a boa-constrictor which has swallowed a buffalo, he waddled in and flopped down in the dining-room, and there lay for two days and two nights without moving. We thought he was dead, but after two days he got up, had a drink, and seemed none the worse.

He also bitterly resented any aspersions on his birth and pedigree. When being exhibited at Simla he was defeated by two dogs belonging to Mr. Phelps the tailor, the judge being Padré Dale, a well-known sporting parson and dog fancier. "Romp" was a good deal annoyed about this in his placid way, and thought he ought to make a protest. And to do so followed the methods of Mr. Kensit and Father Black.

Next day was Sunday, and we all, as in duty bound, went to church, leaving "Romp" at home



as usual. He had never dreamt of going to church before, but some other dog evidently told him that *Padré Dale* was going to preach that day. So “ *Romp* ” slipped away from the house, went to the church, lay down on the mat at the open door, and behaved with great decorum. But no sooner had *Padré Dale* ascended the pulpit than, perhaps recognising the voice of the unjust judge, he sat up and began to bark vociferously. Everyone took turns to look round, and last of all we also turned. Thereupon my wife went out to remove “ *Mr. Kensit* ” to a safe distance, and, curiously enough, the only remark she was heard to make was :

“ Good dog, ‘ *Romp*. ’ ”

Perhaps most people having seen a snake-charmer look on his performance as a fake, the snake having had his fangs drawn and therefore become more harmless than a dove. Possibly this is the case with some, but there are genuine snake-charmers as well, who will charm and capture the most virulent cobra or hamadryad. One day my syces came to me at *Mardan* and said there was a hole in the corner of the motor-shed, and that they had seen a cobra come out of it. We lay in wait for him many days, but could never catch him. So I told the syces to search for a snake-charmer. They eventually came across a travelling snake-charmer in the Bazaar, and we took him to the motor-shed.

He began playing on his flute, which is like an ordinary flute, but has a round chamber the size of a small cocoa-nut half-way down. He had only played a minute or two, a particularly soft and melodious tune, when out came the cobra, and advanced across the shed towards the player. None of us having a stick handy, I said to one of the syces :  
“ Fetch me a stick.”

The snake-charmer at once ceased playing, and the cobra retreated to his hole.

"No, no, Sahib, you must not kill him, or the gods will be angry. I shall never catch another."

"But what's the good of catching snakes if you do not kill them?" we asked.

"Sahib, I will catch him for you, put him in a basket, and take him five miles out into the country and let him go. But he must not be killed."

To that we agreed, and the snake-charmer began to play his flute again.

The cobra immediately came out and almost danced towards him, as if enchanted with the dulcet sounds. On the ground the man placed a small round basket, and led the cobra with his music till its head was over the basket. The man then deftly dropped the lid of the basket on the cobra's head, and, through the crack left, its body quietly followed its head and curled up in the basket. The man picked up the basket, tied a rag round it, and marched off into the country, where he let the cobra go.

To see one of these experts extract the fangs from a cobra is an interesting sight. A cobra can only strike when he erects his head and a foot or so of his body. He can then only strike the exact distance of the standing portion of his body, he cannot spring, nor can he bite whilst creeping along the ground. A hair's-breadth outside the radius of his strike is perfect safety. Nor can he strike backwards. The expert therefore manoeuvres to get behind the cobra, preferably when it is wriggling away, or when it has put its head in a hole on the way to escape. The man then seizes the cobra's tail with his left hand firmly, and, as quick as lightning, runs his right hand up the cobra's body and gets it safe by the neck. As long as he has nerve and holds tight the cobra can do no harm. With great deliberation he then takes out a pocket-knife and calmly cuts out the cobra's fangs. A squirt of

deadly poison is seen to spurt out as from a syringe, and the cobra is harmless. A child might play with it.

As subalterns in search of knowledge, we often tried to get up a fight between a mongoose and cobra. A mongoose is a long furry little animal, rather like a weasel, and is supposed to, and I believe does, attack and eat a cobra whenever he wants to. But we could never bring the battle off. We tried every way to incite either or both to attack, but neither would. We even starved the mongoose, and when he was very hungry threw bits of raw meat close up to the cobra. But the mongoose knew his business to a hair's-breadth. He would go up and eat a piece of meat not an inch outside the cobra's strike. The cobra would strike just that fraction short, and the mongoose never winked an eye or stirred in the least, just munched on at the meat. But inside the deadly circle he would not go.

One of the Native Officers said that a mongoose was immune from cobra bite because of his fur coat, and so also was a cat.

“I will fetch mine, Sahib, and you shall see.”

Having fetched his cat, he threw it into the room. Now these scientific researches were being carried out in an empty room in one of the houses in the Fort: a ground-floor room with French windows on two sides. Against these windows had flattened their noses a lot of the men, whilst we of the elect sat on the mantelpiece out of harm's way, and a Native Officer sat half-way up a ladder in the corner, piously ejaculating: “Perchance I shall, by the grace of God, not be seized on from behind.”

The cat made one wild leap straight on top of the cobra, and we all exclaimed, “Here is a tiger indeed.” But this was apparently quite unintentional valour, for the cobra struck twice and the cat turned at once and made a wild dash through the

glass window into the faces of the intelligent observers. She was, unhappily, never seen again, which proved that fur is not cobra proof.

Undoubtedly, however, fur, or even cloth, will save a man by absorbing part of the poison, especially if the cobra has recently bitten something else, and thus weakened, or diminished the virulence, or volume of the poison.

Captain Hammond of The Guides, the same who won the Victoria Cross at Kabul, was once out shooting, when he was bitten in the leg by a cobra. He had on at the time a pair of puttees, such as soldiers now wear. He was alone with his servants, and knowing that the first effect of the poison is to make one drowsy, before falling into a sleep from which there is no awakening, he told his servants to take his arms on each side and walk him up and down, on no account allowing him to go to sleep. He also took some raw spirits which act as a partial remedy. His servants obeyed his orders for a long time, till at length Captain Hammond could bear the fatigue no longer, and, being a powerful man, he capsized the two servants right and left, and went to sleep on his camp bed. Next morning he woke up quite well, the folds of his puttee having apparently saved him.

## CHAPTER VI

### CAMPAIGNING IN EGYPT

A Dance at the Mess—Sir John McQueen—Off to Egypt—Five Special Trains of Camels—A Fire on Board—Another Fire—The Arab's Tail missing—Entering Suakin Harbour—Fine Pilotage—The Battle of McNeill's Zareba—The First Rush—The 15th Sikhs—Our Own Adventures—A Shotgun Saves Us—Sudden End of Battle—Tamai—"Down into the Deep Sea"—Only a Bruise—The Water Tanks—The Humane Subaltern and His Horse—He and Sir George Greaves Disagree—The Sun Shone Again—In a Zareba—A Strange Thing—On the Jetty—Un-guarded Malefactors—A Severe Skirmish—A Babu and a Blue-jacket to the Rescue—A Gold Watch and D.S. Medal—Shooting for the Pot—An Unwelcome Surprise—The Ship of the Desert—Hasty Return to Camp—Young Kid of the Goats—A Small Night Alarm—A Chance Shot—A Happy Escape—Sir William Gatacre—His Energy—The Sentry—His Orders

WE were having a dance in the Mess one evening, quite a small affair, in honour of the Lieutenant-Governor, who had come to inspect the regiment in the course of his autumn tour. As one of the hosts of the evening, and as in duty bound, it came to my turn to make my best bow to the wife of the Military Secretary, and to ask her to tread a measure with me.

In the course of treading that measure, the wife of the Military Secretary, one of the most beautiful of ladies, remarked :

"John has just got a telegram asking for two Officers to be sent at once to Egypt for service there."

Now "John" was no less a person than that redoubtable and splendid soldier, Sir John McQueen, who formerly commanded The Guides. Being full of my good fortune as regards a partner, and just



exactly at the right stage as regards moral courage, I said :

“ Then let us at once tackle Sir John on this important point.”

“ Yes, let us,” agreed my kind partner. So up we sailed to Sir John, my courage perhaps rather inclined to issue out of my best Wellington boots as we approached that stalwart warrior.

“ I hear, sir, you have had a telegram asking for two Officers to be sent to the Egyptian War ; do you think I would do for one ? ”

Kind old Sir John beamed down on me, and answered in his bluff and hearty way :

“ Well, I don't know why you shouldn't, young fellow.”

I went away frightfully happy, and danced like mad all the evening. After supper, or thereabouts, happening to collide again with Sir John, he patted me kindly on the shoulder, and said :

“ Do you know, young fellow, I have to-night received no less than thirty-eight applications, by telegram and otherwise, for those two appointments to Egypt, so don't be too sanguine, but I'll remember you were the first to apply.”

I thanked him, in rather a half-starved manner I am afraid, and went to bed with my heart in my boots—the same Wellingtons.

What earthly chance had I, an exceedingly obscure subaltern, against thirty-eight, yes, *thirty-eight* tremendous fellows ? and in my dreams their merits enlarged to quite an enormous extent. With the cold of next morning it was, of course, evident that my chances were absolutely nowhere ; but, with the happy tolerance of youth, one hoped for better luck next time, and then thought no more of the matter.

Two days after we were out hawking, some eight or ten miles from cantonments, when in the far dis-

tance appeared a streak of dust, manifestly a galloping horse ; further, it was apparent the rider was heading for us ; finally we could distinguish that it was an orderly in uniform. The moment we discovered that, my heart went up with a bound.

“ That’s my orders for Egypt, I’ll bet a goose ! ” And so, sure enough, they were.

“ You have been selected for service in Egypt,” the orders ran, “ but will first proceed to Jhelum, and take over 500 camels which are being sent to Egypt under your charge.” I did not know one end of a camel from another, nor anything about him, or his ways ; but the British subaltern is somewhat accustomed to these sudden calls on his resources, and takes things as they come. Yet it must be confessed that those 500 camels and their 250 attendants proved to be a tough undertaking. It took five special trains to carry them 1000 miles to the sea, and a 6000-ton ship to carry them 2500 miles across the Indian Ocean to Suakin. Why half of them did not fall out of the trains, or the whole of them get burnt alive on the ship, is one of those miraculous coincidences which do occur.

Looking out of the carriage window, at a curve, one was frozen with horror to see about half the camels, having broken their knee halters, standing up in open trucks with only a two-feet freeboard, whilst the train swished round the corner at twenty miles an hour. By all the laws of gravity they should have been shot off, but they were not.

On board ship our narrowest escapes were from fire. I went round the whole ship myself, every hour or two day and night, and one night came across a camel driver, three decks down, who had just emptied his hookah on to a handy pile of dry hay, and was placidly warming his hands at the grateful blaze. He probably concluded that a whirlwind had struck him and the blazing hay. We got it

put out just in time to save a general conflagration ; but the gentleman concerned had reason to sit down carefully for some days after.

Another escape came also to a near one, my own syces being the sinners on this occasion. It is the early morning custom of the Indian syce to collect a pile of the last night's soiled horse bedding, to light it, and squat over it warming himself. Without a shade of humour, or indeed malice, my syces followed the usual custom the first cold morning on board ship. In one second the flames had caught the awning and there was a blaze all along the deck. Falling bits of burning canvas set more bedding alight ; all the horses, about a dozen, broke loose in terror, and, as the Sergeant expressed it, " there was 'ell to pay for a few minutes." Happily for all, at that particular time in the morning the hoses were ready fixed for swabbing decks, and that saved the ship and everything in it. As it turned out, little or no damage was done, except to the awning ; and to my grey Arab's tail, which had mostly disappeared in the conflagration.

Arrived off Suakin, a Naval Officer came on board and took charge. The entrance to Suakin Harbour is very narrow and intricate, and the harbour itself had never before held more than five ships at a time. That being so, our Naval Officer took us in slap-dash, and in casual converse informed the Captain that there were already forty-two vessels inside.

But, bless their hearts, what is that to a British Naval Officer ? Sure enough a forest of masts and, later, hulls appeared, and straight ahead a poky little gap, apparently about large enough to hold a Thames wherry. At the precise moment when we appeared to be about to charge several ships all at once, the Naval Officer said, " Let go your bow anchor " ; or it may have been sheet anchor, or

any other anchor, who knows? Anyway, it was an anchor, and the Captain understood, and let it go. At that exact moment the tug *Samson* nosed into us on one side, and the tug *Hercules* on the other, and before most people had time to wipe their eyeglasses, our 6000-ton ship was in that little crack meant for a Thames wherry. The Captain came down to lunch just after, and he was fairly perspiring with astonishment at this wonderful piece of pilotage.

Twenty-four hours after we were in the thick of the thickest battle. It was the battle of McNeill's zareba. We went out with a convoy, which, heavily guarded by half a dozen regiments in hollow square, was depositing stores in a dépôt a few miles out. The square convoy duly arrived, and whilst the camels were being unloaded the troops set to work to cut down thorn bushes to form a zareba.

Some regiments piled arms and thus went to work, but the more wary, amongst them the 15th Sikhs, slung their rifles on their backs. All of a sudden, from the direction of the sea, our safe side as was imagined, a great turmoil quickly arose. First a confused murmur, then shouts, then galloping cavalry scouts; then stampeding camels and men; then dust, and yells, and clamour; and then about five thousand Arab spearmen and swordsmen charging through the bush.

It is a curious bush in those parts—thorny mimosa, so thin that a column in fours can easily march through it, but so thick that no clear view is obtainable for more than fifty yards in any direction. Great hordes of Arabs poured through the bush exactly like sand through a sieve, and no one could see to shoot till the enemy was right on him. The confusion was accentuated by the mass of soldiers who had no arms dashing back to get them.

By the grace of God, and no one else except per-

haps the 15th Sikhs, knows quite how, the situation cleared itself almost as suddenly as it had arisen. There was a tremendous fusillade for a few minutes, every man shooting straight before him, regardless of friends or foes. Then lo and behold! the attack was over, and gone, and melted away! And two thousand corpses, friend and foe, lay around that bloodstained spot.

Our own adventure was brief and curious. Those who had no job on hand were off their horses eating a bit of hard tackle, as we called it, and were talking to their friends. When the dust and disturbance arose a Cavalry Officer instinctively mounted, that being his method of fighting; whilst his infantry friends stuck to their feet, whilst syces held their horses.

At this moment there dashed through our little knot a cavalry patrol, driven in by the enemy, which stampeded most of the led horses. One Officer, however, thus bereft, had in his hand a 12-bore shotgun, which really was about the best weapon anyone could have for such an occasion, and probably saved us from adding our number to the slain.

Hot-foot on the tail of our cavalry patrol came a swarm of Arabs, prancing, yelling, waving their swords, and coming on at a great rate. The mounted officers were nearly stampeded, but held their ground and, steadying up their horses, let fly with their revolvers. But revolvers will not stop a rush like this. Happily our friend with the shotgun was a more formidable defence. Perfectly cool and collected, he let drive one barrel straight in the face of a very unpleasant-looking ruffian who was leading, and the second barrel into the stomach of a second. The Arab who was hit in the face, and probably blinded, clasped his hands over his eyes and melted away to the left without a word. The man hit in the stomach fell in a heap. The rest dived away



each side and passed on. One more shot did our friend fire, and then no one else came near us, the tide of battle had passed us, and was raging furiously behind.

This was comforting in a way, but it very soon seemed to include being shot in the back by our own people. A hurricane of bullets swept past us, and we were now off our horses pretty sharp and lay flat on the ground, and piously wished we were moles. But happily this hurricane lasted only a very short time, and neither horse nor man was hit. Then all seemed to grow quiet and there was a dead silence, occasionally emphasised by a few stray shots. That was the end of the battle, a bloody one whilst it lasted, but short, sharp and to the point.

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This campaign consisted mostly of marching along in huge squares surrounding loaded camels, moving at the rate of about one mile an hour. It was not a very interesting campaign, as such, to the ordinary subaltern, but he usually manages to get some joy out of most unpromising circumstances.

At the scene of the second battle of Tamai we arrived in one huge square, but with no camels inside. These had been left in a zareba some way behind, for we were out to fight. This battle followed the usual course ; the great square was nosed into the enemy, who, as in duty bound, attacked it with swords, and spears, and great bravery. They were met with volleys, and the bayonet ; and after a moderate fight melted away, leaving the ground strewn with dead and wounded. In the midst of the shooting, which was mostly done by us, I was sent across the square, which was perfectly flat and sandy, like the desert of Sahara, with a message, and was riding an Arab, "Mercury" by name, my first charger. We two were great friends and comrades,

and had fought together before. We were going at a walk, for the sand was deep, the distance short, and there was no great urgency. About the middle of the square, however, the world disappeared for the rider, and he sank into a deep sea. At first the light was bright through the greenish water, but as he sank it got dimmer and dimmer, and at last went out. The next thing he remembered was sitting propped up in the sand, and someone, a long way off, saying :

"Well, old boy, feeling better?" I was not in the least, but did not feel strong enough to tell a lie.

There was a big sandy space in front, and "Mercury" was standing by with his reins on the ground, whilst closer was the Staff Surgeon, and by him an orderly with a brown canvas bag on which was a large red cross. Then the brain got somewhat clear, and I suddenly asked with great fierceness :

"What the devil's up?"

"Nothing much, sonny," the doctor replied, now quite close, "only you got a bit of a knockout." The knockout had apparently come from an ounce bullet, fired probably from a Snider rifle, and spent when it hit me. But chancing as it did to strike exactly over the heart, it had sent me down into those deep seas, and nearly out into the regions beyond. But though aching badly, we all had to laugh that evening.

Bivouacked still in a square, I, as an invalid, was given a snug and bullet-proof spot behind a large pile of water tanks. For all the requirements of the army in the matter of drinking water had to be carried with it on camels. This pile of water tanks was guarded as if they were cans of gold and contained diamonds ; and in charge of them was a subaltern named Allen, a Sandhurst comrade. That subaltern officer had a horse, and the horse was

very thirsty indeed, and this smote the subaltern officer to the heart.

Thus communing he with himself :

“ Here is this large pile of water cans, and no one will miss one, and am I not lord of all, and shall I not give one of them to my poor old gee ? ”

And so did he, but by evil venture at this precise moment up came Sir George Greaves, the Chief of the Staff, surrounded by a glittering throng with red tabs, the first campaign in which they were worn. And these caught that unrighteous subaltern in the act of doing a moderately righteous thing.

Sir George Greaves was a very popular officer of the older type, with an old-fashioned vocabulary of exceptional virulence and potency ; he was also somewhat annoyed. Standing, therefore, on the pile of tanks, pulpit-like, he began to give our friend the subaltern some of his best.

“ Do you know, sir,” he was continuing, “ you ought to be taken out and shot ! Shot, sir, nothing short of it. You have been guilty of one of the most heinous military crimes possible, you—— ” and so on for a lot more.

“ And now, sir, what have you got to say for yourself ? ”

To anyone observing the culprit it was evident that his attention was elsewhere. His gaze was fixed with fascinated anxiety on the pile of tanks. So that when the point-blank question came, he stammered forth :

“ Yes, sir ; quite so, sir ; very sorry, sir ; but do be careful, sir, or the pile will come down with a run.”

The Chief of the Staff tried not to smile, and his staff looked at him to see whether they might laugh or not, and someone behind sniggered without orders.

Then the sun shone, and the subaltern was not shot.

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One night we were sleeping in a zareba, a couple of miles or more from the coast, and during the night Her Majesty's ship *Dolphin* from the harbour threw a searchlight occasionally over us into the bush beyond. If the bluejackets thought they saw anything moving out and beyond they would plump a shell over the zareba into the bush. We were weary and tired, and most of us slept undisturbed through this intermittent bombardment. Next morning, however, two syces were to be seen approaching, staggering under the weight of an enormous shell.

"This strange thing," they said, "was found lying just beside your Honour's horses this morning. Perchance it was thrown there by the warship." His Honour's horses were exactly fifteen feet from his Honour's head, and he felt grateful to the maker of that shell.

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On another occasion there was again a narrow escape from a premature departure from this vale of tears. Standing unarmed at the end of a long jetty, I was watching a steamer being unloaded—camels, or something equally interesting. It was midday and very hot, and everything was going slow and sleepy. Helping in the work of unloading the ship was a gang of prisoners, lifetimers who had been tried and condemned for participating too heartily in the Alexandria massacres. In charge of these malefactors were a couple of negro policemen with rifles. I was the only white man there, and had just been noticing with impersonal amusement that both the policemen on guard were fast asleep in the shade, when I felt an exceedingly hard welt on top of my head. Happily an Indian helmet is fairly thick, and whipping round I found myself face to face with a large and evil-looking scoundrel, armed

with a crowbar ; while the rest of the gang were crowding up looking ugly.

I had learnt something of boxing at school and at Sandhurst, and was fairly stiff on the legs. So I dashed for the crowbar assailant like a tornado, and fortunately knocked him over into the water. Thereupon the rest of the gang closed up and commenced to wage war. With my back to a truck I was having a decidedly thin time of it, which in a few seconds could only have ended one way, when a welcome diversion came from the ship.

An Indian Mohammedan clerk or overseer, who was engaged in the clerical portion of unloading the cargo, happened to hear the scuffle, and, looking over, saw the Sahib's dilemma. With great promptitude and braveness, for he was entirely unarmed, he dashed down the gangway on to the rear of the gang, shouting abuse and shouting for help. At the same moment a British bluejacket, who was standing at the shore end of the jetty, saw the disturbance also, and he too, unarmed, charged to the rescue and used his fist with splendid effect.

The turmoil thus raised woke the policemen, and they also tumbled up, and between us we secured and disarmed the gang, for all had got hold of some offensive article. For his prompt bravery on this occasion the Mohammedan clerk was presented by Government with a gold watch, suitably inscribed, and Rs.200 ; and the sailor was given the Distinguished Service Medal.

The Mohammedan clerk unfortunately lost his eye later from a bursting soda-water bottle, and from henceforth promoted me to be his father and mother with financial rights as such, for the rest of his days.

Subalterns sometimes do dreadfully rotten things. One day out at Otao, a zareba about forty miles from Suakin, finding time heavy on my hands, and being heartily sick of bully beef and hard tackle, I,



as one of the brotherhood, determined to sally forth on a camel to see if it were not possible to pick up a gazelle or two, or some wild guinea-fowls to help the pot. Now the bush around was swarming, off and on, with Arabs, and though none had been seen for some days no one could be sure about the matter, and certainly no one should have gone out, as this graceless person did, at that particular time.

I had not gone more than a mile when, with two easy shots, a couple of gazelle were bagged. These loaded up on the camel, we were returning to camp well pleased ; I sitting on the front seat of the saddle, and the syce on the rear. Wending our way back through the thick bush, noiselessly as a camel goes, we came quite suddenly on five Arabs sitting under a mimosa bush. Both parties were greatly startled by the sudden encounter, and, having a Martini-Henry carbine at full cock across my knees, instantly had it up and blazed point-blank into the brown of those five Arabs—and idiotically enough missed the lot !

The discharge of a carbine just past his ear was, however, too much for the nerves of the ship of the desert, and he whipped round, very nearly unseating both his riders, and made a clean bolt of it. The Arabs, who also had Martini-Henry rifles, and also apparently at full cock, ran after the fugitives, blazing away with great persistency and sufficient accuracy. The syce, being in the back seat, naturally was in a post of honour and danger which he was the last to appreciate ; and he could be heard piously and continuously praying that “perchance he might not be hit in the hinder parts.”

The Arabs, being nearly as bad shots as I was, missed both me and the syce with comforting frequency, but a chance shot happened to graze the old camel, and that sent him skipping along faster than ever. Finally we fetched up, very hot and

not at all proud of ourselves, at the zareba. I have a dim recollection of nothing being said at the time about this adventure, and of those gazelles being passed off on an unsuspecting mess as young kids of the goat.

That syce had a curious after-career. Having field rations and nothing to spend his money on he asked me to keep his wages and give him a lump sum at the end of the war. It was a matter of Rs.100, and this he received when we returned to India. This sum he thought he could not better expend than in the purchase of a wife. With this intent he opened negotiations with an elderly lady who had a daughter for disposal at that price or thereabouts. After a good deal of haggling the bargain was concluded and the syce paid down the money. Unfortunately, however, not being a business man he did not at once take delivery of the goods, nor did he demand a receipt. The elderly lady, therefore, bestowed her daughter on another possibly at a higher price and swore she had never received a rupee from my syce.

Whilst we were at Mess that night the syce went to my bearer and said the Sahib wanted his sword. The bearer handed out an ordinary blunt parade sword. But the syce said that was not the sword; the Sahib wanted his sharp sword, the one he took on service, to show to one of his guests. Thus armed the syce went off and slew the elderly lady and her daughter. He then pranced down the bazaar, saying he would kill anyone who prevented his escaping across the Border. Passing through the Mess compound he was held up by the guard, who formed a ring round him and there he stood at bay.

The Havildar sent in word to the Colonel, who evidently not quite catching what was said, remarked rather testily across the table :

"There is a damn syce of yours making a row. Go out and see what it is about."

I also, not knowing what had happened, walked out of the bright Mess into the pitch darkness outside, and also perhaps having caught some testiness from the Colonel, exclaimed :

"What the deuce are you up to? Come here."

Out of the darkness a sword was thrust into my hand, and the syce's voice said :

"I will surrender to my own Sahib, but to no one else."

As he had served me faithfully and well, I secured the services of a good lawyer from Lahore, who got him off with ten years' transportation to the Andamans.

Doing duty with a Company of Mounted Infantry the skipper had, one night, the escape of his life. Some of us had been dining, or rather taking pot-luck, bully beef and the like, with a friend over the other side of the zareba, and were going home to bed, when a few Arabs started shooting from a bluff not far off, on which by rights should have been a picket. We had often discussed this point, and had come to the conclusion that we had better chance it, for a small picket might have been swamped and a large one could not be afforded. Moreover, the Arab is a poor shot at best. Indeed, the Arabs of those days shot exceedingly badly ; and not without cause, for one of their cherished notions was that if a musketeer wanted to hit and kill an enemy, the more he raised his back sight the harder he hit him. This, at one hundred yards' range, was a priceless advantage to an antagonist whom the Arab wished to hit very hard indeed.

But to resume, two or three of us were collected at the side of the zareba towards the bluff, listening to the bullets singing high overhead, and watching the moon rise from behind the bluff, hoping to get

a shot back when we could see something to shoot at. Our skipper, who had gone to bed, got up and joined us, and we were all chatting together for five or ten minutes. Then the moon rose, and we had a blaze at the brow of the bluff. After that all shooting ceased, probably for good and sufficient reasons, and we all tumbled off to bed.

Next morning, when the skipper's servant came to wake him, he noticed a small hole through the roof of the little tent, and drew his master's attention to it. His master gazed at the hole, and thought that it looked uncommonly like a bullet hole. Further, it occurred to him that a bullet coming from the bluff and dropping at that angle could not well have missed the occupant of the bed. This made him think a little, and thereupon he made diligent search, lest peradventure he also had got a hole through him unbeknownst in his sleep. The skipper, however, proved to be whole and hearty and without a blemish. But what they did discover was that the bullet had gone through the camp bed on which he had slept, had cut a furrow in the ground, and thence ricocheted out low through the opposite wall of the tent. This looked like a miracle, till the skipper recollected that for five or ten minutes during the night he had been out chatting with us by the zareba side. During that most fortunate absence the messenger of Death had passed him by, but only for a time. Three months afterwards he joined his fallen comrades in the great and happy Beyond.

Sir William Gatacre used to tell a rather entertaining story about himself. As we all remember, he was in later life a man of intense energy, though, curiously enough, in his earlier days he was just the opposite. He used to teach us Topography at the Royal Military College, as far back as 1877, and our recollection of him was far from that of a strenuous officer.

As a young subaltern once sagely remarked, speaking to my cousin Arthur, not with reference to Sir William Gatacre :

"Do you know, sir, I notice that when a General takes to serious soldiering late in life, he is rather apt to make a *hobby* of it !"

He had just been serving under a very strenuous General, who had started late in life.

Sir William Gatacre commenced to show his greatest energy after he had thirty years' service, and the soldiers nicknamed him "Backacher."

It was about the time of the battle of Atbara, before or after, that the General was paying a surprise visit by night, *à la* Napoleon, to his sentries. Accosting one of them, he demanded :

"Well, my man, what are your orders ?"

"Sir, my orders is to keep a sharp look out for the enemy and for General Gatacre."

"Oh, indeed !" said the General, smiling to himself. "And do you know General Gatacre by sight ?"

"No, sir, I don't."

"Then, pray," with cold displeasure, "how are you going to keep a sharp look out for him ?"

"Well, sir, it's like this. The Sergeant says, 'If you sees an Officer a-fussin' and a-worryin' around, that's General Gatacre.'"



## CHAPTER VII

### A BURMESE ADVENTURE

The Burmah War—A Subaltern's Job—A Six Months' Venture—An Englishman and a Gurkha alone—Up the Salween—Dacoits—Through Siam—American Missionaries—Their Kindness at Zimmé—Loss of Saddlery and Pack Saddles—A Cigarette Case Incident—On Again—Healing an Old Lady—Kiang Tung—Trading—Ponies Confiscated—The Half-Caste Burman—An Outlaw—His Valuable Service—The Toothbrush—We Escape—Tracked—A Lost Carbine and nearly a Lost Head—Sunday Rest—Sapphires at Twopence Apiece—We Secure Sapphires and Cat's-Eyes—The French Banker's Valuation—The English Jeweller's—Sapphires Stolen—Mr. Gould the Consul—A Rough Sapphire for 40 Dollars—Where it Came From—A Very Old Bird

IT was after the Burmah War had been running for some months, and whilst Sir George White was working eastwards towards the trans-Salween Shan States, that those responsible for the strategy of the campaign decided to find out whether there was not some easier way. All the chains of mountains and rivers in Burmah run roughly north and south, and therefore a direct move eastwards entailed crossing all of these at right angles ; whereas a route leading up convenient river valleys might lighten the task. I was then a subaltern in the Intelligence Branch, and was summoned one day by Colonel Bell, the head of that department, and asked if I knew of any officer who could sketch well, and would take on rather an arduous job.

Two or three names were mentioned, and Colonel Bell grunted at each.

" I suppose you wouldn't care to take it on yourself ? "

“ Indeed I would,” with great alacrity.

For to tell the truth, sitting in an office tent collating other people's information, was not much in my line. To be strictly truthful, I loathed it. To be out and about, travelling through new and dangerous countries, that would indeed appeal to any subaltern. The outcome of these deliberations was that I was directed to undertake the work. I was to go accompanied only by a Gurkha orderly, who, with his Tartar features and dressed as a Shan, would pass as one of the many Tartar tribes to be found in that part of Asia. I also was to wear Shan dress, not with any hope of being mistaken for a Shan, or Chinaman, but to avoid attracting undue attention by the way.

It was calculated that it would take about six months to work round, and to get back with the information required. A considerable portion of the route to be followed ran through hostile countries ; and not a single word of any of the languages or dialects of those parts did either of us know. But mere details of this sort do not necessarily trouble the British subaltern, he gets through somehow. The risks of the venture were only lightly and incidentally touched upon, and merely took the form of being advised to make a Will before starting. But it was very carefully impressed on us that it was very important to get back the information, even if we could not get back ourselves.

So off we went, the Gurkha and myself, with £200 in gold leaf in a tobacco pouch, and with rolls of new two-anna bits stowed away in our pockets and bundles. First we went down to Moulmein by steamer, and thence worked up the Salween River for some hundreds of miles, but could not get through that way, or see the road for an army. Moreover, the country was swarming with



MYSELF DRESSED AS A SHAN, 1886—87



bands of dacoits, and that we managed not to fall in with these was a piece of great good fortune.

Retracing our steps, therefore, we made a dash eastwards across the Burmese border into Siam. Here we were again amongst peaceful and peace-loving people, but slightly on the avaricious side. However, new two-anna bits go a long way in a country where coin is scarce, so without much trouble or difficulty we worked up to Zimmé in the north of Siam.

There, much to our surprise, we came across an American missionary and his family, in reality half traders and half missionaries. Good people who carried a large and imposing Bible in the one hand, and with the other dealt in merchandise. A retail shop full of general wares, tinned provisions, saddlery, and every conceivable saleable article. The Siamese might take either the stores or the Bible, or both; or for that matter might take neither. The Americans were most kind to us, and what was still more important gave us valuable information about the routes ahead, and how best to attain our goal.

At Zimmé, for some unknown reason, a determined effort was made by the Siamese officials to prevent the further journey northwards. Indeed, every obstacle was placed in the way, and finally, the night before the contemplated departure, the whole of our saddlery and pack saddles were stolen. It was very apparent that this was a Government affair, for the penalty for theft in those days, in the northern provinces of Siam, was death, and numerous instances of the scrupulous honesty of the people in consequence of this law had been experienced.

Time out of number would a villager come running after a wayfarer to restore an abandoned tin or bottle, for fear he should be accused of having



stolen it. And even at Zimmé, two days before, a striking example of this universal horror of stealing had occurred. We had been sitting out late one night by the side of one of the main roads into the town, and in the darkness had dropped a silver cigarette case, and left it. The loss was not discovered till midday next day, when on search being made it was discovered, shining brightly, and lying in the middle of the road. Hundreds of Siamese, men, women, and children, must have passed that cigarette case, but not one would touch it.

It was in this dilemma that the Americans came in strong and kind. They fitted us out completely with a new stock of saddlery, and sent us on our way rejoicing. Curiously enough they unwittingly conferred a further benefit; for knowing the country and the dangers ahead, they arranged for us to travel with a caravan of traders, who were returning empty, along the very route we wanted to follow. These traders, who were Chinese Mohammedans from Yunnan, from this introduction jumped to the conclusion that at any rate one was an American missionary, that he was out in search of souls; and possibly, and more reasonably, in search of dollars also.

The caravan was now entering again the Shan States, and as the British were then at war with these very States, that little misunderstanding made a very sensible difference to a British Officer. The caravan of ponies travelled at a great rate. Starting at dawn, it pushed along at a good jog-trot pace, till about noon. Then off-saddle and rest, a paddy feed for the ponies, and a graze round. After a couple of hours the caravan loaded up again, and pushed on till evening. Sometimes it stopped at villages, and sometimes bivouacked in the forest, as occasion offered. At night the ponies were turned loose to graze about at will till dawn,

Every white man, and especially an Englishman, is *ipso facto* a skilled medical practitioner, wherever in the by-ways he wanders ! Only one white man, and he not a doctor, had been in this country, fifty years before ; yet his fame survived. On the present occasion only some quinine, a few Cockle's pills, a bottle of chlorodyne, and a pot of vaseline, composed our medical outfit, so we could not spare much for stray patients. This little medical store was, however, saved in a curious and effective manner.

At one village there was an old woman with very bad fever, who asked to see the white wise-man. It was explained that there were no medicines to spare. But one of those present, who was a traveller and had been in Burmah, said that this did not matter in the least. He had himself been ill at Moulmein, and went to an English doctor ; and the English doctor wrote some charms on a piece of paper, and that made him quite well. In proof whereof he produced a prescription written out by the English doctor, which he had put in a little bag, and worn ever since round his neck. At his earnest solicitation therefore a charm on similar lines was written for the old lady. It read, however, " May God make you well soon " ; instead of *Ac. Ros. iii. T, Cal. praep. gr. xxx.*, and the like. To the great surprise of the amateur doctor, but apparently to no one else's, the old lady turned up next morning before the caravan started, and said she now felt quite well !

Travelling on, after many days, the caravan came to Kiang-Tung, the capital of the Eastern Shan States. I and my orderly had now been some months travelling, and during that time had had no news from our own people, nor did we know how the British forces were now disposed. As far as could be judged we had arrived at about

the right latitude, so that if we turned westward we should eventually hit off Mandalay, or one of our columns.

At Kiang Tung, in spite of the spurious reputation earned as American missionaries, we found ourselves in considerable peril. Our only friends, the caravan traders, had gone on, and left us ; and we two were alone in a large city full of bands of armed desperadoes. To disarm suspicion we opened a small stall in the market, and sold cloth and odds and ends of trade goods which we had brought with us ; partly as presents, and partly to trade our way along, where money was not current. We tried several times to get away, but the ponies were confiscated and we were kept virtually as prisoners in a small serai. It might leak out at any moment that one was an Englishman, and that, of course, very probably would mean death, and of the lingering sort.

In this dilemma came to us a curious looking person dressed as a Burman. He spoke very good English, and said he was a half-caste, the son of an Englishman named Macgregor. He was born in Rangoon, but had long left those parts, and now traded with Yunnan. He evidently guessed that one was an Englishman ; but the blood told, and he kept his knowledge to himself. At first we thought he was a spy, as indeed he was, sent by the Chief to find out who we were. We were therefore very careful with him, and maintained stoutly the rôle of traders, and one an American at that. Bestowing on him a handsome present—to wit, two yards of scarlet tunic cloth, out of which he made a startling waistcoat—he was asked to help to get back the ponies, so that the journey might be continued.

Next day he returned, and said the Chief would let us go if we would consent to give up our

arms. We had two Martini-Henry carbines, one double-barrelled shotgun, and one revolver ; but to part with these meant a short shrift either here, or on the first march out. Giving the Burman another handsome present, some dazzling buttons this time, he was asked to use his influence to get better terms, for it was impossible for a merchant to travel in the present disturbed state of the country without arms. It was further added that we were not without influence amongst the British, and could perhaps some day do the Burman a good turn.

By sheer good luck that hit the right nail precisely on the head. Out it all came. The Burman was an outlaw ! He wished most ardently to get back to Rangoon, but could not because of this ban. The exact yarn he spun proved later to be far from the truth, but these were unnecessary lies ; for in reward for the services he presently rendered it required no great effort later to get the ban removed. Anyway, the bargain was struck ; and it speaks well for the English name throughout the world, that a stray criminal a thousand miles from anywhere would do a signal service to an Englishman on the bare promise that he would repay that service, at a distant and mystical date, somewhere at the other end of the world.

The further negotiations took the Oriental form of procrastination and bargaining. The Chief would let us go, but we must give him one rifle and the best riding pony—rather a pearl, by the way. As the result of the negotiation of days, those demands were at length discharged in full. A good fat wad of gold leaf, worth about £50 ; a rich Cashmere robe, one of the job lot brought for trading ; and, with a touch of tragic humour, the one and only toothbrush ! This last item took a lot of negotiation, for Kiang Tung was 1000 miles



from the nearest chemist's shop. What the Chief wanted with this precious article, unless it was to be worn as an aigrette in his turban, it is difficult to understand. Finally, after many days, the three ponies were handed back late one night. Before dawn next morning we were trekking westward in exceeding haste towards Mandalay.

The first intimation that we were being tracked and followed came in a sudden and curious way. All through the journey I had, as part of my duties, made a rough survey of the route ; sometimes very rough, and sometimes fairly accurate. We were now going along a single file track through thick forest, and the only way to get a fairly accurate bearing was to let the ponies get a little ahead, and then to take a compass bearing on to the sound of the bells. On the present occasion I had lagged behind alone, as usual, to take the bearing. My carbine at full cock was resting against a tree trunk, to the right rear. At this time it happened that both my eyes were very bad from dirt and glare, and what not ; and as it was not feasible to bandage up both on the march, each was bandaged in turn for a spell, to give each an even chance. It so happened, at this moment, that the right eye was bandaged. Having taken the bearing, I was jotting it down in the book when the bells of another caravan sounded. Hastily slipping the book and compass into a pocket, I turned round to pick up my carbine. It was gone !

Here was a nice state of affairs ! In thick forest, an enemy's country, unarmed, and a loaded carbine at full cock in somebody else's hands close by ! I at once blew a whistle for the Gurkha, who was not far ahead, and meanwhile, with a considerable want of discretion, but moved thereto by wrath and indignation, went back along the path. The next thing I remembered was looking, point-blank, down



the muzzle of a Martini-Henry carbine, at very short range. Then a loud report, and then oblivion.

And that was the end of the adventure, but I heard a good deal about that carbine for many months, indeed years afterwards. The Gurkha would say :

"I am, of course, a mere soldier in the ranks, but one thing I do not lose, and that is my carbine. Your Honour, on the contrary, belonging to a nation of Princes, can do so without being tried by court martial !"<sup>1</sup>

Resting at a village one Sunday, for we found that in this long and arduous trekking the observance of the Mosaic law was a very sound piece of legislation, a small boy appeared, and squatting down began to unroll some unclean rags. Unfolding the innermost rag he produced a bright blue stone, one side cut and the others polished. A sapphire without a doubt.

We asked him where he got it from. He pointed to the river bed, and by signs replied that it was dug up there, only higher up. Also by signs we enquired how much he wanted for it, and by way of demonstration held out a handful of loose cash. After gazing longingly at this, he chose out a new and glittering two-anna piece (twopence) and handed over the sapphire in exchange.

This was interesting, a place on this terrestrial globe where sapphires could be dug up out of a dry river bed and gladly sold for twopence. This was a youth to be cultivated, and we invited him to break the Sabbath still further and dig up more sapphires, and for each of these he would receive the handsome guerdon of a new two-anna piece. For, as before mentioned, we had rolls of these, fresh from the bank, for use by the way, but never

<sup>1</sup> An Indian soldier if he loses his carbine or rifle is invariably tried by court martial, like a Naval Officer who loses his ship.

before had contemplated buying more than a small chicken, or a dozen eggs with each.

Towards evening the urchin returned with eighteen more sapphires and two cat's-eyes, each wrapped up in a separate rag. For each and all, including the cat's-eyes, he received one new two-anna bit. We took the precaution of taking the latitude and longitude of this village, never visited before by white man, and made plans for raising a company to exploit this rich river.

Many months afterwards, at Bangkok, I was talking to a French banker who was by way of being knowledgeable about stones, and it occurred to me that, without saying where they came from, I would get his opinion on the sapphires. He looked at them, and admired them, and handed them back.

"What do you think they are worth, Monsieur?"

"On my parole, almost 1250 francs each on an average."

This was good news, an average of £50 apiece, and the cost of each a bright two-anna piece. Visions of a palace in Park Lane and a coach and four flashed across the subaltern's eyes.

Some months later, on return to civilisation, I took them to a well-known jeweller for valuation. He looked at them with some curiosity, and then got a magnifying glass. Then he called another expert, and they both looked at the stones one by one. Still they seemed puzzled, and looked at me rather suspiciously. I told them very indefinitely where I had bought them, but not the price paid. Taking up another sapphire they tried to scratch mine but failed; next they took a diamond and made a scratch. Then they both smiled discreetly.

"We are afraid these are not genuine," they said.

"Dash my wig! Not genuine! Why I bought them in a little village a thousand miles from anywhere."

"That may be so, sir, but they are not genuine. And if we are not greatly mistaken they came from England, and possibly Birmingham."

My great and good Country! Faked sapphires in the heart of Asia! But anyway they were cheap. Just as I was going out of the shop I remembered the two cat's-eyes, and went back.

"These two are also fakes, I imagine?"

They examined them carefully, and their verdict was:

"No, they are not fakes. They are not very good, but might be worth a couple of sovereigns each."

Oh! why had we not brought away a cartload of these!

The cat's-eyes were set in rings and disappeared, probably on fair damsels' fingers. The sapphires also disappeared. They were stolen when I was stopping in a country house, and I hope proved as great a shock to the thief as to me.

But I was not the only victim in those far lands. Mr. Gould, our Consul at Bangkok, was touring in the vicinity of the Chantaboung sapphire mines, and in the evening, in the course of his walk, strolled down towards them. The miners, mostly Shans, were returning from their day's labour, and accosting one he asked him what luck he had had that day. The Shan produced half a dozen dirty-looking stones covered with mud.

"What do you want for them?" asked the Consul.

"You may take your pick for forty dollars," replied the Shan.

"Forty dollars! Go to blazes," said the Consul, and walked on. He had only gone a few yards, however, when he changed his mind. Anyway, forty dollars was not much one way or the other, and he might by chance pick up something good.

"Hi! Hullo! Come back," he shouted. "All right, I'll give you forty dollars for my pick."

The Shan held out his hand and Mr. Gould chose one stone, more or less at a venture, for all were covered with mud.

A year or so after he took the stone to a well-known jeweller in London, and asked him to have it cut.

A few days later he received a note from the jeweller, asking him to go and see him. And the purport of the jeweller's communication was that the stone was a fake, and made in Europe!

This was a champion effort! To salt a real sapphire mine with faked stones! Or was the Shan a very old bird indeed?

## CHAPTER VIII

### AT THE STAFF COLLEGE

A Staff Revival—No More a "Mug's" Game—The New Class—Sir Charles Monro—Sir Spencer Ewart—"The Tyranny of the Horse"—Sir John Cowans—"The Count"—Sir Francis Davies—The Artists and Collaborateurs—Bunbury and Offley Shore—"Boy" Hornby, M.F.H.—Jack Lindley, M.F.H.—"The Cock Grouse"—And his Moor—The Duke's Day—Sir George Aston—A £30 Horse—Heavy Haulage—Nearly Won the Aldershot Point-to-Point—Hon. A. Hardinge, 'Ard 'Ard—A Souvenir of 1870—The Staff College Coach—An Upset—A Nightmare—Sir Francis Clery—The French Professor—"Marked with Extraordinary Liberality"—The Liberality Explained—Sir Frederick Maurice—The Waterloo Campaign—A Remarkable Discovery—Strange Disappearance of No. 64—Col. Lonsdale Hale—Col. Cooper King—Col. Henderson of *Stonewall Jackson*—"Scotland for Ever"—From the Scottish Officers—The Battle of Ballybunnion—From the Oirish Officers—Pork Chops and the Duke

AT the time when we joined the Staff College it was just beginning to become popular in the Army. By popular is meant that there was a keen competition to get there. Vacancies were few and candidates many. For a considerable number of years after it was opened the Staff College was looked on with some disfavour, by the old officers because it was a new-fangled notion, and by the young officers as a "mug's game." By "mug" being understood a brother officer, who neither rode nor shot, nor played any games, who drank water at Mess, went to bed early, and "swatted" at algebra, fortification, and French as a recreation.

But when officers in general, and young officers in particular, grasped the fact that the "mug" before long blossomed forth into a brass hat, a



frock-coat, and shiny boots, and was the official *fidus Achates* of the General, and one to whom the Colonel was exceedingly civil, they began to take notice. They began to say :

“ Darn my skin ! If old Smuggins is good enough to be a Staff Officer, dashed if I’m not too.”

The Staff College had caught on, and instead of those only who were held in least esteem coming forward, the best bloods, and the best all-round men, began to compete. Indeed, it was now ordained that both the Colonel of the regiment, and the General, had to swear strange oaths that the competitor was of the very best quality. And further the General had to take him on his staff for a month, to make quite sure before swearing. Mistakes were doubtless made, but taken as a whole a very good all-round class of officer began to filter into the Staff College.

There were consequently a very happily selected body of officers at the Staff College in 1890-1. Not only bright and sporting, but most of them hard-working good soldiers, and of these many have since performed great services to the State.

Amongst others was Charlie Monro,<sup>1</sup> one of the most cheery, best souls that ever stepped. Always laughing and chaffing, but a hard worker, and one of the stoutest and best soldiers and Generals now serving the King. It was he who performed the military miracle of evacuating the Gallipoli Peninsula without loss, and who has now gone to India as Commander-in-Chief.

Spencer Ewart, then a subaltern in the Cameron Highlanders, was one of the bright particular wits of our time. He afterwards rose to be Adjutant-General and a Member of the Army Council, and is now holding a high command. It was Spencer Ewart who had the courage of his opinions as regards

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Charles Monro, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

horses, and other obsolete modes of progression. In those days, when Sir Francis Clery was Commandant of the Staff College, himself a great horseman and rider to hounds, it got about amongst us that no one could hope to get a good report from the Staff College, or any chance of a Staff appointment in the future, unless he rode regularly with the Staff College Drag Hounds. Spencer Ewart would have none of this. He used to screw up his mouth to one side, in a way which made us all laugh, and say :

"I am a Highlander, and always have been a Highlander, and intend to go on being a Highlander. I hate the sight of a horse, and absolutely refuse to bow down to the tyranny of the horse."

Incidentally this did me a good turn, for he had to keep up a charger, which possibly he did not know by sight. This noble steed he used to lend to me, and together we won several little cups and things.

Spencer Ewart was a very clever fellow and a hard worker, with the soundest judgment, and rapidly worked his way to the front.

Jack Cowans,<sup>1</sup> too, was a friend we all loved. I don't suppose he has an enemy in the world. A wonderful flow of good humour, and always with a good story to tell. There never was a kinder man, except Lord Roberts. In the midst of the most tremendous work he finds time for everybody, great or small. He will answer at once a most trivial note from an old friend, and do his best to help him in his small trouble, whatever it may be. Jack Cowans at the Staff College was one of those men who seemed to have nothing to do except enjoy himself, and make others happy. Yet he was an exceedingly able and clever fellow, who really worked as hard as any one. This characteristic he

<sup>1</sup> Lieut.-General Sir John Cowans, K.C.B., M.V.O.

has carried through life ; he can work like lightning, sound good work too. He is a born organiser of the highest stamp. It was he who, during the South African War, organised and managed the transport of some half a million soldiers to a campaign 6000 miles across the ocean, and maintained them there for nearly three years. As Quarter-master-General in the Great War he has exceeded all his previous records, and has earned in history a very great name.

"The Count," as we called Count Gleichen,<sup>1</sup> then a subaltern in the Grenadier Guards, was also a great favourite. He was a very quiet, unassuming fellow, but with a very ready dry humour, more often expressed in pictorial guise. He was a cousin of Queen Victoria. The Count, Bunbury,<sup>2</sup> and Offley Shore<sup>3</sup> were the chief artists ; and Charlie Monro, Spencer Ewart, and Jack Cowans mostly supplied the witticisms to be perpetrated with pen and ink. Some of these were really works of art, and most amusing to boot. They probably lie in the archives of the Staff College, though some, I hear, have disappeared.

Frank Davies<sup>4</sup> was in our lot. A burly Guardsman, and a very hard and keen soldier. He also has greatly distinguished himself in the Great War in command of a Division, and is now Military Secretary at the War Office.

Master of the Hounds, our first year, was "Boy" Hornby, of the Rifle Brigade. Boy Hornby was a most cheerful soul and permeated perennial cheerfulness round. He had already had the distinction of twice reading his own obituary notice in the newspaper, which possibly added to his cheerful outlook. Once he was killed by the Press of cholera, and the

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Count Gleichen, K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G.

<sup>2</sup> Major-General W. E. Bunbury, C.B.

<sup>3</sup> Major-General O. B. F. Shore, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O.

<sup>4</sup> Lieut.-General Sir Francis Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

second time slaughtered by the same deadly agency on the field of battle. Nevertheless he is still alive and hearty. Boy Hornby was one of the pioneers of polo, and was one of the very best players in the eighties. He left the service soon after, and I last met him at Hurlingham a few years ago, sitting with two remarkably good-looking ladies, his grown-up daughters, whom I had last seen before they were born, so to speak. I sat down with them, and then Boy Hornby began to expatiate, in a loud and cheerful voice, on the sorrows of a man who had ugly daughters.

"Look at those two," pointing at the two beautiful ladies. "What's the good of being a dam' good-looking fellow like I am, and then to have daughters like that?"

They both smiled at him quite serenely, and one of them patted him on the arm and said, "Never mind, Daddy. At any rate, *we* are good."

Jack Lindley<sup>1</sup> was Master of the Hounds our second year, and as popular as his predecessor. His was really a most genial and sanguine temperament, but it amused him, and us, to give a mildly pessimistic tone to his converse. So he was dubbed the "Cock Grouse."

One of the tests by which the students were supposed to demonstrate their extraordinary acumen, as well as extreme accuracy in topography, was for each separately to go out and survey so many square miles of country; and on their return these portions were joined together and mounted for exhibition. Our term did our map, and it was mounted, and gingered up, if one may use such a term in so solemn a connection, by an expert, and laid out on the billiard table for the old Duke to inspect and, we hoped, admire, when he came down a few days hence, to say what good boys we were.

<sup>1</sup> Major-General the Hon. J. Lindley.



On the morning of the Duke's arrival I went in to look at the map, just to see that my bit was all right, and happened to notice just above it, on the left edge of the map, Lindley's effort.

Gazing at it, I observed that it was mostly moorland, and was thinking what a lucky dog he had been to have so easy a piece of country to sketch, when a golden thought occurred to me. I nipped off and got a pen and some Indian ink, and very neatly printed on the margin,

To the Grouse Moor →

By great good fortune, these being the only words on the broad margin, at once caught the Duke's eye.

"Grouse Moor? By Jove, you are lucky dogs having grouse shooting at your very doors. Didn't know you had grouse in these parts."

This was Greek to everyone present except myself. But after the Duke had gone, everyone dashed in to see what the mysterious words on the margin were. I think Jack Cowans, or Spencer Ewart, got the credit for that mild *jeu d'esprit*.

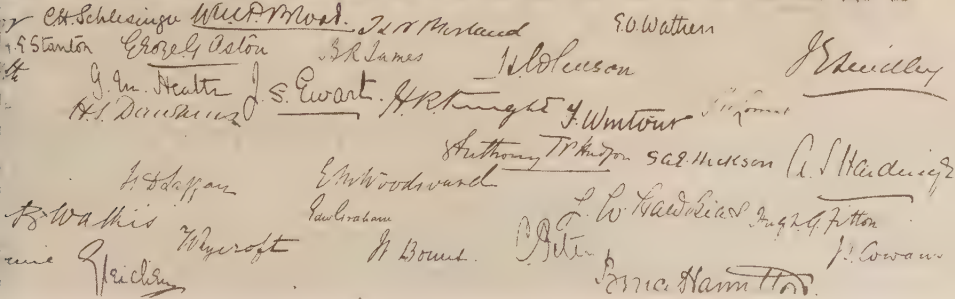
Amongst others learning to be Staff Officers with us was George Aston,<sup>1</sup> known as "Brackish Jack," because he was in the Marines. He was very desirous of winning the Aldershot Point-to-Point Race, and asked me to ride for him. He had bought a horse for £30, or perchance guineas, which when he had been quite himself might have looked like a Derby winner. At this period in his career he was, however, decidedly unsound in three legs out of four, and roared like a bull. But he was a fizzer to go all the same, and jumped like a bird literally, for he just skimmed over everything like a great bird. His legs, however, were naturally a delicate point, and it took a good deal of anxious endeavour to get him to the post sound. On all four legs he

<sup>1</sup> Brigadier-General Sir George Aston, K.C.B.











had cotton-wool bandages, and at the starting-post might be observed several of the Aldershot Cavalry bloods on 200-guinea horses, covertly smiling at him.

Off we went, a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -mile course in South Berkshire, and to this day I believe that gallant old horse would have won, but for one serious defect in the course. He was such a big, free-going horse that jumping into an ordinary narrow country road, in clearing the near bank he arrived with his chest almost up against the opposite bank. Certainly no room was left for any but a cobby, active horse to hop over the next fence. So I nipped off, hauled him up and through the hedge, up and on again. As bad luck would have it, we had to cross five such roads, and at each one I had to haul him out the other side. Yet when we entered the straight there was not a hundred yards between him and the winning horse. Our little lot from the Staff College that day were not a little proud of themselves, for, as far as I remember, we had five out of the first six in, against the whole Aldershot Division.

One of the five that day was Hardinge, a brother of the late Viceroy of India, and of "Punch" Hardinge, "The Viscount," also of our term, and a beautiful rider. I had been at Sandhurst too with Hardinge—'Ard, 'Ard, we used to call him, after one of his own pet expressions, and had known him all my life. We always thought he was an object lesson to all those young bloods who find that they cannot live in a good regiment without a thumping allowance. I don't know what Hardinge had by way of private means, but it must have been very little, yet he kept up two or three horses, and hunted and raced with the best. But to do this he had to live a very simple life indeed. We used to wonder how he lived at all. A couple of eggs for breakfast, perhaps a little cold meat at lunch, and



a diminutive dinner, nothing to drink but tea or water, and no smokes. His mufti clothes and uniform too had to serve a very long time. This fine rider and sportsman met his death riding out of Hyde Park. His horse slipped up on the road and he was instantly killed.

In my room, No. 21 at the Staff College, was a square block of lead about 6 in. by 4 in. by 1 in., made out of bullets picked up on the battlefield of Worth by a former occupant of the room. He had scratched his initials on it, and each successor in the room had done the same. I scratched mine when I left the Staff College, and left the block on the mantelpiece where I had found it. Apparently some years later some collector of souvenirs walked off with it, for it has now disappeared.

It became one of my duties to drive the Staff College coach. I am no whip, but no one else cared for the job. So I took many lessons from Courtney of the 13th Hussars, a first-class whip, who was leaving, and hoped to be of some use. But unfortunately, early in my reign I upset the coach driving up to the grand entrance by night, and after that only my most devoted friends would sit behind me. For years afterwards my form of nightmare, after Welsh rarebit and that sort of thing, was having to drive a coach, through heavy traffic, from inside, and leaning out of the right-hand window. I have had some shocking drives that way.

Colonel A'Court was another Staff College man of our time who has made a great name for himself, writing under the name of Colonel Repinton for *The Times*. He is probably the best known and most able writer on military subjects in Europe, and *The Times* made a good find when they discovered him.

Another writer of our time at the Staff College

was Colonel Maude, R.E., a very clever man with a ready gift for the pen. As far as I remember, he and the College parted company for a period owing to a little difference of opinion. Maude was very direct at thinking and direct at acting, and hated what children call "let's pretend": in other words, elaborate schemes wherein all sorts of things were "pretended." One day we were given a billeting scheme. That is, we were each told off to represent a Staff Officer in an advancing army, and were sent on to various towns and villages to prepare billets, and tell them off on paper to our imaginary troops. Maude was sent to Reading, I think. To commit the whole scheme to paper was a long day's job; but he returned by the next train, and his billeting scheme when sent in consisted of one paragraph.

"The day was fine and the barometer rising. I therefore ordered the troops to bivouac instead of putting them into billets."

The professor did not like that. Probably he thought it was meant for what the soldier calls "lip."

Sir Francis Clery was Commandant of the College, and we rarely saw him; but he seemed to know all about us and our smallest doings. My first interview with him was over a little matter of my knowledge of the French language. Much to the surprise of all, on passing into the Staff College it was noticed that the examiners had conceived a very exaggerated opinion of my knowledge of French and had marked me very high. The French Professor at the Staff College soon found this out and reported my deficiency to the Commandant, evidently thinking I had been cribbing at the examination. So up went a report to the War Office, and my papers and those of the candidates seated on each side, in front and behind, were re-examined. The result was that an answer came back:

“ This Officer has evidently not used unfair means by gaining assistance from his neighbours, but it appears that owing to an oversight he has been marked with extraordinary liberality ” !

I had a shrewd notion how the liberality occurred. My French tutor gave me three essays to learn off by heart, and assured me that we were bound to have one or other set in the examination. One was about Napoleon. To my horror, when the examination came none of my three certainties were amongst the subjects for an essay. The nearest approach was an essay on the Volunteer Force. That being so, after careful thought, I wrote :

“ M. l'Examineur, it is with regret the most profound that I have to inform you that having only just returned to England after many years in India, I do not know anything about the Volunteers, but——”

And then I ground off our old friend Napoleon.

Another who was favoured by fortune in the entrance examination was Bruce Hamilton,<sup>1</sup> but this was told me under seal of secrecy one day when we were walking out together. Bruce Hamilton was a most charming and nice fellow, and was, I believe, with Pomeroy Colley at Majuba Hill. He and his brother Hubert Hamilton, who was killed in France, both worked their way to the front in a manner which did credit to their Staff College training.

Amongst the professors was Sir Frederick Maurice, the well-known writer on military subjects. We were given a *Mémoire*, as it was called, to write for him, on the Waterloo campaign. One of the knotty points, for three-quarters of a century, had apparently been, why the British did not blow up the bridge at Charleroi, when they retreated before the French to Quatre-Bras. Naturally neither had I

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Bruce Hamilton, G.C.B., K.C.V.O.

the foggiest notion, but as I was writing the *Mémoire* it occurred to me in a casual way that possibly the reason why the British had not blown up the afore-said bridge was because they had no gunpowder wherewith to do so.

That was merely an idle and tentative suggestion, but it raised quite a respectable furore in the military epistolary world. When the time came for giving us back our *Mémoires*, Sir Frederick gave us a lecture on their general merits, and demerits; naturally as a matter of discipline, chiefly the latter. But he reserved one point for special comment. He said:

“One interesting and very important point, new to most of us students of military history, has been brought forward by one of you—No. 64 (that was my number). He mentions that probably the reason why the bridge of Charleroi was not blown up was because the British had not at the moment sufficient powder to effect this hitherto unexplained omission. That is a very interesting discovery indeed, and I should like to confer with No. 64 after the lecture as to the source from which he obtained this most important military detail.”

Needless to say that No. 64 was the very first to escape from the lecture hall, and avoided Sir Frederick Maurice with great cunning for several weeks after.

Amongst those who came in to lecture us occasionally were Colonel Lonsdale-Hale, Colonel Cooper-King, and Colonel Henderson. All first-class lecturers, who taught one more in an hour than could be acquired in days of undirected study.

Colonel J.R. Henderson, the world-renowned author of *Stonewall Jackson*, was a very fine fellow, as well as lecturer and writer. We had been cadets together, and again met here in a higher scholastic atmosphere. He was one who impressed you as a great



man, and had he lived would have been invaluable to England in this Great War, for he had a Napoleonic grasp of strategy.

Just before he died I met him in the United Service Club, in rather a bad light, and at once chaffed him on getting back his figure, for when we last met he was on the burly side.

"Yes, old boy, hard work, I expect," he answered quite cheerily.

A few weeks after I saw the death of this truly great man in the newspaper.

Filled with generous impulse, the Scottish Officers put their purses together and presented the Mess with a large engraving of Miss Thompson's celebrated picture, "Scotland for Ever," which depicts the Scots Greys at the Battle of Waterloo on their grey horses, headed by one particularly fierce animal, charging straight at the observer. Under it was inscribed on a brass plate, "From the Scottish Officers." This picture was hung in a place of honour at the end of the ante-room, and grateful thanks given to the donors.

At the end of the year, when the Duke came down to inspect us he would usually take up his position with his back to the fire, whilst we were all gracefully grouped in the offing, and the professors filled the middle distance on each side. The Commandant then read out his report, and the number of marks obtained by each student, in each subject, and so forth. During this, to any but the victim, somewhat tedious ordeal, the Duke was to be observed gazing fixedly over our heads, as we thought at "Scotland for Ever," and all the Scottish Officers felt a glow of conscious merit, whilst we mere English wished we had eclipsed it with "St. George and the Dragon."

So interested in the picture did the Duke become that he pulled out his glasses and looked still more



fixedly at it. In spite of the tenseness of the occasion, when at any moment one might hear one's doom, some of us began to look round, and then for the first time discovered something new. Beneath "Scotland for Ever," which, as before mentioned, was a very large picture, appeared a very small one indeed in a massive gold frame. From where we were we could not see what the subject was, and turned our attention once again to the business in hand. When this was all over, and the Duke had given us his blessing, he advanced on "Scotland for Ever," and the heavily framed picture beneath it. We heard him laughing heartily, and when we could decently approach discovered the cause of this merriment.

The very small picture in the heavy gold frame depicted an Irishman on a donkey charging down the village street, thereby stampeding a pig which had upset an Irish peasant woman, and on the other hand frightened all the ducks and geese into mad flight. The picture was named "The Battle of Ballybunnion," and underneath, on a neat brass plate, was inscribed "From the Oirish Officers." The artist and perpetrator of this pleasantry was Captain Bunbury.

There was a prevailing notion in the seventies and eighties of last century, a notion which had almost been confirmed into a tradition, that above all things the Duke liked pork chops for lunch. Doubtless he had once eaten pork chops at a mess, and expressed his approval of them. Yet it is true, "a little is a good thing, but too much is enoff," as our Gallic friends say. However, there was the tradition, so that wherever the Duke went, and at whatever Mess he lunched, pork chops confronted him ; whilst the Mess President smiled complacently to himself at his own exceeding tact and forethought. The Duke, who was a kind and courteous Prince,

bore up against this infliction for many years, and one of the leading mathematicians of the day calculated up exactly how many pigs H.R.H. had been compelled to eat in that period.

At last, however, in desperation, he confided to one of his staff, with a certain old-fashioned wealth of language, that if he ever again saw a pork chop in a regimental Mess it would go hard with that regiment. Our Mess President happily had heard of this, and carefully excluded pork chops from the lunch menu, with the happiest results. The Duke said it was the best Mess he had ever been in, and went away in his most genial mood.

As I have said, in the days when we went to the Staff College it was just emerging from the times when it was considered a "mug's game" to go there. And perhaps it helped the Staff College a good deal to get through the fog, when the Staff College XI could handsomely beat the Aldershot Division at cricket ; and could place five out of the first six in the Aldershot Divisional Light-weight Point-to-Point Race.

## CHAPTER IX

### SOLDIERING ON THE INDIAN FRONTIER

Peace and War—A Prisoner of War—General Sher Afzul—His Escort—The Modest General—A Matter of Buttons—The Enraged Soldiery—Diplomacy to the Front—The History of a Greatcoat—An Irish Stew in June—Handing Over to the Civil—Intense Agony of the General—The Police Officer Adamant—A Find of £20,000—A War Correspondent—*The Times* First in the Field—*The Times* Last in the Field—While the Cat's Away—The Gambler—"Prepare to Meet thy God"

IN India it is one day peace and next day war, and the two glide into each other, without much fuss, and out again at the other end. It was so with the Relief of Chitral, about which my brother Frank and I have already written in sufficient detail.<sup>1</sup> At one moment we were sitting in profound peace at the Mess of the King's Royal Rifles, and the next we were mobilizing to rescue a garrison 250 miles distant through a practically unmapped region of stupendous mountains, inhabited by hostile warriors of considerable ferocity.

After the Relief of Chitral in 1895, it was decided to send the opposing General, Sirdar Sher Afzul, whom we had captured, to India, as a prisoner of war. He was placed in my charge, and I was given a company of British Infantry and a small Cavalry escort to guard him through two hundred miles of mountainous country that lay between us and the Indian railway. The party was to move down

<sup>1</sup> *The Relief of Chitral*, by Capt. G. J. Younghusband and Capt. F. E. Younghusband.

slowly, march by march, and at each halting-place would find a camp pitched, and a relief escort ready.

The prisoner was most amenable, and gave no trouble. His only complaint was that he found it "difficult and embarrassing to dress and undress, and to say his prayers, with a Highlander's bayonet within eighteen inches of his back." This legitimate grievance being removed, the march continued pleasantly, day by day, till the cavalcade reached a place called Khar in the Swat Valley. Here, whilst taking a short rest under some trees during the heat of the day, a mixed deputation approached.

This consisted of the Adjutant, some other Officers, the Sergeant-Major, and some Sergeants of one of the oldest of His Majesty's regiments, which chanced to be encamped close by. They had a complaint to make. It was that the prisoner of war, Sher Afzul, was wearing their regimental buttons, and they wished to flay him alive, or otherwise horribly dispose of him, for so doing. Sher Afzul's costume, when we took him in the cold heights near Chitral, was an Astrakhan fur cap, a double-breasted Russian greatcoat of the warmest description, thick breeches, and long Russian boots. We had certainly mildly wondered why he retained this exceedingly inappropriate costume in the extreme June heat nearing the borders of the plains of India. But, beyond noticing that he had brass buttons on his greatcoat, no one had appreciated that they were British, and belonged to the old and gallant Bedfordshire regiment.

This fact, however, being verified, the enraged soldiery were pacified with soothing words, and it was promised to retrieve the buttons in a possibly less sanguinary manner. As we rode on, therefore, I ranged up alongside Sher Afzul, and explained to him that the English were a quaint and curious nation, with some quite unexplainable habits and customs, and that one of these was to adorn certain



*Photo*

CAPTAIN CHARLES TOWNSHEND, COMMANDING IN THE DEFENCE OF CHITRAL,  
1895, AND AS MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE DEFENCE OF KUT-EL-AMARA, 1915

*Elliott & Fry*

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regiments with buttons of divers metals and devices. Further, that they bitterly and hotly resented any one who did not belong to that particular regiment wearing the peculiar buttons it affected.

Sher Afzul looked sideways in a somewhat furtive and fearful manner, as if he suspected that this parable concealed some deep and horrible design. Then getting very pale, and dropping great beads of sweat, partly doubtless attributable to the heavy Russian coat, he replied with caution :

"Without doubt, the English are a nation of princes !" which, however polite, did not seem very relevant.

"Yes, quite so ; but to get to the matter in hand. On that greatcoat of yours you have the buttons of the regiment we have just passed through, and they are somewhat displeased, and would be obliged if you would return them to the regiment."

A look of immense relief came over the General's face, and he beamed on me ; a smile which implied, "Is that all ?" Yet with Oriental gravity, he merely said :

"Your Honour has only to give the order, and they shall be yours to do as you will."

"Thank you ; you shall have another set to replace them. May it be asked where you got them ? They probably have a curious history, for you come from Central Asia, far from where that British regiment has ever been quartered."

"I bought them in Kabul, and know nothing more about them," he replied, with a slight return of anxiety.

Afterwards we traced out the story. They proved to be buttons off a British Officer's greatcoat. Two years before such a coat had been stolen near Peshawar, and had never been recovered. This coat had been sold by the thief, possibly the Officer's own servant, and had since been traded through to

Kabul; then gradually descended in social and intrinsic value, till the buttons became too good for the coat. They were then transferred to a new Russian greatcoat, and this General Sher Afzul had bought as we saw it.

At the next halting-place, before five minutes had elapsed, the buttons came over in a curiously prompt manner, and were in due course returned to the regiment that owned them.

Next day the General appeared in the same greatcoat, though the weather was now excessively hot; its glory perhaps somewhat dimmed by the hasty substitution of tin trouser buttons of the most impoverished description, in place of their gorgeous predecessors.

"Surely you are rather hot in that coat?" I ventured to remark. "Can I lend you, or buy you, some cooler garment?" Again the General looked at the British Officer furtively and with great suspicion, and answering somewhat shortly:

"No, I prefer this."

Everyone to his own tastes. If he liked to be turned into an Irish stew, inside a double-breasted Russian greatcoat, by a June sun, that was his affair.

The following day the prisoner and his escort arrived at their journey's end, where it had been arranged to hand General Sher Afzul over to the Civil authorities. Under their arrangements he would be conducted to his future place of residence, a salubrious station in the Himalayas. On taking over a State prisoner it is apparently the custom of the Civil authorities to fill in an identification paper, giving his height, appearance, and any particular marks or crosses he may have; a swivel eye, or what not. Also an exact list is taken of the clothes he has on, or off, and of his other possessions. This seemed an ordinary, and not too obnoxious a pro-

cedure, but the querulous objection raised to it by the General was quite pathetic. He implored and beseeched that he might be saved this indignity; he even went down on his knees and wept bitterly, and implored the military to intervene, adding that they were his father and also his mother. They had been very kind indeed to him, and had exercised no tyranny—except, possibly, in the matter of the buttons.

Being a guileless soldier, not very deeply versed in Oriental subterfuges, I put in a good word for him to the head of the Police. But that official was adamant. He knew the Oriental, and he knew his business. He added in English :

“Very sorry, but I must obey orders. After all this fuss I shall be exceedingly surprised if there is not something very important concealed about his person.”

As I could do no more, I took my leave, first handing over to my late charge a new and gorgeous and unexceptionable set of buttons, procured by telegram; at the same time bidding him be of good cheer, and wishing him better fortune in the future.

That evening the Police Officer came to me, grinning broadly.

“I told you so. I knew all that fuss meant something. We found nearly £20,000 worth on him, in money and stones, besides some most important papers !”

It had not been therefore entirely native modesty, or even piety, that made the close proximity of a British bayonet so unwelcome. Nor apparently was it sheer love of warmth that made our prisoner wear a thick coat on an Indian June day.

. . . . .

It was during this campaign that I was for a short, and on the whole inglorious, period a War

Correspondent, and to no less a paper than *The Times*. On one occasion, however, I was lucky enough to do that paper a good turn.

It was during the storming of the Malakand Pass, and Sir Robert Low, on whose staff I was serving, found that he had used up all his reserves and the Pass was not yet taken. He therefore told me to hop on to my horse, and ride back nine miles to Dargai, to order up another regiment. There I found General Gatacre and his Brigade, and gave Sir Robert Low's order. In the course of the day my horse had been shot through the foreleg, and I was looking round for another horse to take me back when I noticed some British soldiers putting up a telegraph post.

"Hullo! What are you doing?"

"Just putting up the head of the wire, sir," replied the man. An inspiration struck the temporary War Correspondent.

"Will you take a telegram, a long one for the Press?"

"Yes, sir, certainly; the wire is quite free at present."

So whilst an Orderly searched for a fresh horse, the temporary War Correspondent sat down and wrote a brief account of the storming of the Malakand up to the time he had left the scene. This telegram naturally got home hours before other correspondents' telegrams; indeed, *The Times* was the only paper that had an account of the battle next morning. More curious still, the first intimation the Viceroy or the Commander-in-Chief at Simla received of the battle was via London.

This was an undeserved but lucky chance, and *The Times* was duly pleased. But luck turns, and so it did next time. A long account about the battle on the Panjkora River, where The Guides were cut off and made such a splendid fight of it, took thir-



teen days getting home, because for twelve of those it had lain peacefully in the pocket of a telegraph orderly.

. . . . .

After the trip to India with Sher Afzul I returned to headquarters, and there found my tent standing, and everything as I had left it. My Indian servant came forth beaming to meet me.

“Hullo ! Luckoo, how goes it ? ”

“Very well, Sahib ; all is well. Save only your Honour’s money, which I have had the misfortune to lose.”

“Lost my money, you scoundrel ; what do you mean ? I left ninety rupees with you.”

“Without doubt, Sahib, you did ; but, owing to misfortune, I have lost it all in gambling. This is a very shameful fact, and I place dust on my head in obeisance. Nevertheless let not the Lord be angry, he shall cut it from my pay to the last coin.

“Tea is now ready,” and he waived the matter aside.

On the camp table, possibly as a peace-offering, reposed an important-looking cake. This, with much guile and some bribery, he had induced a friendly cook to make, asking that suitable words might be inscribed on it in pink sugar. The cook was a Christian, and scratched his head a good deal over a suitable inscription. Finally, after consulting his Bible and taking into consideration the general situation, it occurred to him that he could not do better than

“Prepare to meet thy God.”

Possibly that cook had no sense of humour.

. . . . .

But apart from campaigns, there is much marching to and fro in India in the ordinary course of

relief. It is roughly a thousand miles from Lucknow to Peshawar. A perfectly straight road, running through lines of trees for about one thousand miles, though here and there are breaks in the trees which last for a few yards, or a few miles. But to all intents and purposes it is an avenue a thousand miles long. The avenue does not, however, commence at Lucknow, it has already run five hundred miles or so from Calcutta.

Along this Grand Trunk Road, as it is called, yearly march north-west or south-east troops moving in relief from cantonment to cantonment.

Formerly regiments often moved by route march the whole way from Calcutta to Peshawar, and such minor marches as from Peshawar to Lucknow, or from Jhansi to Rawal Pindi, were of frequent occurrence. These lengthy marches were on the whole very pleasant, except perhaps on the days when the subaltern's turn came round to carry the Colours. It is a great honour to carry the Colours, especially in a battle; but to be strictly truthful, they are exceedingly heavy, especially the King's Colour. And to march with them fifteen miles in a hot sun, along a very dusty road, in the middle of eight hundred soldiers, all rather hot too, is a somewhat exhausting operation. All subalterns in their turn share in this honour, and we used to look days ahead, and calculate whether we should fall in for a long march or a short one.

The average march is twelve miles, but sometimes it is fourteen or fifteen, and sometimes only ten or eleven. Those extra few miles make a lot of difference when carrying the Colours.

Soldiers are early birds in India, so as to get the march over before the day stokes up, for even in the coldest weather there is a great rise of temperature between midday and three o'clock. Réveillé usually would sound an hour before dawn, and by dawn the

camp had been struck, the baggage loaded up, and the regiment formed up ready to start. Then the band broke forth into "A Life on the Ocean Wave," or other appropriate effort, and off we went. Each company by roster led the regiment, for it is easier marching at the head of a regiment than at the tail, as all soldiers know.

After each hour's march a halt of five minutes was made ; and half-way through the march we came to "Coffee House." Not, be it observed, a Coffee House or the Coffee House, but plain "Coffee House." This is one of those shibboleths in the soldier's language which, doubtless, had some obscure original connection with coffee. "Coffee House" was the roadside spot to which breakfast had been sent on the night before. Tea was there, cocoa there might be, whisky and soda certainly gleamed in the back shades, beer was obtainable, but coffee was conspicuous by its absence.

These were very pleasant alfresco breakfasts ; a steaming hot stew, poached eggs, cold hunter's beef. "Iron istew," "Unda-poach," and "Hunter," according to the Eastern potentate who ministered to our wants.

During the half-hour allowed for thus unbending from the military yoke, all our baggage streamed past us, to be met on arrival at the next camp by the Quartermaster and Camp Colour party, who had made a yet earlier start. Thus, when the regiment arrived it found the camp marked out, the baggage all up and ready to be unloaded. The pitching and striking of a camp was in those days a matter of some little ceremony. All tents were spread on the ground in their exact places, whilst the men stood by. A single note of the bugle rang out, and, as if by magic, a camp of mathematical exactness stood pitched. It disappeared in a similarly magic manner at the blast of a bugle next morning.

A march would be over, and all snug in camp by lunch time. Then those who had guns might sally forth to feed the pot with such game as could be found ; usually partridges, quail, duck, snipe, or wild pigeon. Whilst one or two, taking service rifles, might get a little useful exercise in stalking a black buck or ravine deer. Sometimes, if there were pig about, three or four would make up a party and go out pig-sticking.

After an early dinner there would be, as likely as not, a big camp fire ; songs and stories, pipes and grog. And so early to bed, for there was the early worm again to be caught before dawn. On the way sometimes great cantonments were passed, and here old comrades were to be met ; and regiments again encountered alongside which we had lain years before at the Curragh, or Aldershot, or had fought alongside of in some old campaign. Great was the hospitality of these, and many the friendly matches of cricket or polo played with them as we passed along. There was no soldier football or hockey in those days.

After a month or six weeks these marches undoubtedly grew stale. The same straight and endless dusty road before us, the same old halts, the same old camp ; till at length we began to count the marches left, and eagerly to tick off one more daily trudge. But at last the goal is in sight, the last march near its end. And there, as a sign and token, by the roadside stands our new General and his Staff. There too are the Officers deputed by each of the regiments, and batteries, in garrison to meet and welcome us, and with them all their bands. Led by the General, and the bands playing in turn, we finish our last march ; putting, be assured, a little extra spring and swagger into it ; just to show that a little matter of a thousand miles or so is nothing to the old Lily Whites.



With Cavalry and Artillery these long marches are made on similar lines, but each march is sooner accomplished, though there is more to do for the Cavalry or Artillery soldier, both before and after the march. A Cavalry regiment will trot and walk a march in half the time it will take an Infantry regiment to cover the same distance. But before starting, besides striking his tents and packing his own and his horse's kit, the Cavalry or Artillery man has to give his horse his morning feed, a rub down and polish over, and to saddle and harness up. So also, when the Cavalry and Artillery arrive at the new camp, they have to water and feed their horses, groom them, and make them comfortable, before they can begin thinking of pitching their camp or getting their own food. And after a hasty snack, there are "stables" and cleaning up of saddlery and harness.

Sometimes regiments are called upon to make forced marches, and this is where the grit and stamina and discipline of a regiment comes out. Some of these marches are historic, such as that of The Guides to Delhi in the Mutiny, when they covered, horse and foot, a distance of 580 miles in  $20\frac{1}{2}$  marching days, an average of about 27 miles a day, "at the hottest time of year through the hottest region on earth." But often the most noble marches have been made unheard of, and unsung.

. . . . .

It is not only, however, during campaigns, or when marching in relief, that adventures befall one in the land of too much perpetual sunshine.

One day the Padré, the Sapper Officer, and a native clerk, were driving up the Frontier road in a tonga. The road is long and weary, and at every six or eight miles comes a change of ponies, and a short respite from the tortures of the way.



The Padré had his seat beside the driver in front, and the Sapper sat with the clerk, back to back with him, and looking astern. As they were leaving one of the stages, after changing ponies, the Padré in front noticed that a man tried to jump on to the step, but missed his foothold and fell on the road. Thinking it was the syce, who thus often jumps on at the last moment, he expected the driver to stop; but that official, apparently not having noticed the incident, was driving on. Looking back the Padré saw the man pick himself up and commence running after the tonga. He then thought that the man must be a ganger or workman on the road, who wanted to make some petition. So he told the driver to stop, and wait for him to come up.

As the running man came close, however, he suddenly whipped out a large knife and went straight for the Sapper, who occupied one of the back seats. This Officer at once reached for his revolver, it being an order for all to go armed on this road; but before he could get at it, the assassin was on him. On the spur of the moment, with the instinct of self-preservation, and to gain time to get out his revolver, the Officer suddenly kicked out, and caught the assailant under the chin with his heavy boot. This sturdy rebuff knocked the ghazi over backwards; and the native clerk, who was sitting beside the Officer, tumbled out, and falling straight on to the fanatic, pinned him to the ground.

Both Officers had now extricated themselves from the tonga, and running up to the struggling pair, shouted to the clerk:

"All right, hold on; we have got him now."

And so they had, for they easily overpowered the fanatic; but the clerk was dead, stabbed through the heart.

This was one of the hired assassins whom the Mullah Powindah, a fanatical Mohammedan priest

of great local influence, used to send across the British border to murder British Officers. Unfortunately for his propaganda, on this occasion a native and co-religionist was the victim.

At one period, only a few years ago, this priestly ruffian had no less than thirty-four parties out, singly, or by twos and threes, watching their chances on the road, in cantonments, at fairs, on railway platforms, or wherever occasion offered, to kill a British Officer unawares. The Mullah himself was a fugitive from justice, and an outlaw; for whilst in a British prison serving a sentence for some grave offence, he murdered his jailer and escaped across the border.

There are countless stories of these fanatical endeavours, and here is another.

It was a hot Sunday night in one of the Frontier stations, and a lady and two Officers were sitting at dinner. It was a dull dinner, tough and tasteless and short of vegetables, for nothing will keep, and nothing will grow, at this time of year in that fierce desert. But at last it came to its languid conclusion, the servants withdrew, and the lady went across the hall to the drawing-room. Both the drawing-room and the dining-room gave out on to the same veranda, and from these two doors bright shafts of light fell across the veranda, leaving the rest in inky darkness. The lady sank listlessly into a chair under the punkah, facing the veranda, and took up a half-read book. She had been reading for some minutes when, glancing over the top of her book, she saw a white figure crossing the shaft of light.

At first glance she thought it was a punkah coolie, for the clothing was not clean enough for a house servant. But why should a punkah coolie be holding a long Afghan knife? Thoughts come quick, and action quicker, to those who live amidst the ever-present dangers of a Frontier station. She

jumped up immediately, and dashing across the hall to the dining-room, burst in on the two Officers.

"There is a man with a knife on the veranda ; he has just passed the drawing-room door coming this way."

Both were in evening clothes, but both had their revolvers handy, for several attempts had recently been made on Officers' lives, and all went armed at night. Seizing these they dashed into the veranda, and were at once confronted by a wall of darkness. Moving cautiously to right and left they swept the veranda, and the lady bringing a light they saw it was empty.

On the opposite side of the road was the Cavalry Mess, where I was dining, and one of the Officers ran across to ask for assistance, whilst the other roused all the servants and searched the compound. Very soon patrols of horse and foot were on the move, and the whole surroundings carefully searched, whilst Cavalry patrols trotted out to stop the roads leading to the border. But no suspicious persons were found.

"A case of overwrought nerves," muttered the Doctor.

"Imagined the whole thing ; or else perhaps it was really a punkah coolie, and the knife a stick." Such was perhaps the unexpressed thought of many. Yet a week afterwards, in the written report of one of our spies, occurred the following :—

"I was to-day talking to a Ghazi who told this narrative. Peradventure he spoke the truth, but more probably his mouth was full of lies. 'I had determined,' said he, 'to kill a Sahib, by the grace of God, and thus gain a place in Paradise. But this is a difficult undertaking, for the Sahibs are very brave and also closely guarded, so that even when they are asleep their men watch over them. And every road is guarded by armed soldiers who prowl about quietly, and are not like fixed sentries. However,

by the help of God and by choosing dark nights, and avoiding the roads, I made a plan. I worked from garden to garden, for each house stands alone in a large garden, and thus spied out the land without detection.

“ ‘ I noticed too that it is the custom of the Sahibs to have their evening meal about eight or nine o’clock, and in some houses only one or two sat down together, whilst at others nine or ten. So I chose a house where only one or two sat down, and where there was a very large garden, and bushes for concealment close to the house. There I sat down silently and watched the Sahibs eat their dinner. There were two Sahibs and one Mem-Sahib. At first there were a good many servants about, but after a time these left the room, and the Mem-Sahib also got up, and went out, I could not see where.

“ ‘ Then I said, “ God willing, now my time has come. I will kill one or both of the Sahibs whilst they sit unarmed.” So I drew my sword, and quickly crossing the path, entered the veranda. There was no one there. Barefooted I crept noiselessly along to where a bright light came from a door. I thought it was another door of the same room the Sahibs were in, but when I cautiously peeped, I saw only a Mem-Sahib reading a book. This was unfortunate, for no Ghazi slays a woman, yet I had to cross the light to reach the Sahibs, for a punkah coolie made approach from the other side difficult. Waiting a second I slipped quietly across, but the woman saw me—may she perish childless!—and very quickly warned the Sahibs. So I fled, and escaped easily owing to the darkness, but I shall try again before long, so that I may fulfil my vow.’ ”

But he never did, for his turn came first—a ‘303 through the head.

Another happy escape occurred to an Officer at a railway station on the Frontier. It was about four



o'clock in the afternoon, and he was waiting for his train to start ; meanwhile passing the time by looking through the literature on the bookstall. Seeing him thus absorbed with his back turned, one of these fanatical assassins who was out for a short road to Paradise by killing a British Officer, thought that this was his chance. Working therefore quietly and unostentatiously through the mixed throng on the platform, he got close to his prey.

Then suddenly whipping out a pistol he pressed it against the back of the Officer's neck and pulled the trigger ! By the merciful intervention of Providence the pistol missed fire, and the Officer escaped ! The would-be assassin was at once seized, tried that afternoon, and by eight o'clock next morning was hanging as high as Haman. Such is swift justice on the Frontier, a prompt and effective method of dealing with outrages of all sorts ; a method which might with great advantage be introduced into other parts of India when the necessities of the situation are such as to demand straight justice.

It is curious how little accidents or irregularities may save a man's life. On the other hand, how a trivial matter, such as stopping to light a pipe, may end his career. Mohammedans say it is Kismet, and fatalists say it is Fate, whilst others say it is Providence. You must take your choice, but anyway here are a couple of cases out of many.

Duty took the writer to Sheikh-Budin, a little station perched on a lofty rock on a spur which runs from the Suleiman range. It is close to the Mahsud-Waziri border, and during certain years has been openly threatened by raiding gangs. We drove thirty-six miles one blazing evening to Pezu, which is supposed to be the hottest place on earth ; stayed there the night, and preparations were made for the onward journey to commence in the cool of morning at 6 a.m. The distance up the hill is four-



teen miles, and it is generally negotiated by riding a mule.

The night at Pezu, however, was poisonously hot, and every sort of stinging beast swarmed around. Sleep was impossible, and the tired traveller merely tossed about and waited for dawn. Directly it was light enough I got up, put on my clothes, ordered my mule, and started off, telling the escort and baggage to follow on as soon as they were ready. I rode through without adventure, and remember hugely enjoying a cold drink on the Club veranda, and then sleeping like a log for four hours.

It was a week later that we learnt that a small gang of Mahsuds had planned to waylay and shoot me that very morning. But, thanks to the hot night and the mosquitoes, I had passed before they expected me. And shortly after the daily pickets and patrols came out, and they escaped into hiding.

A friend of mine on the same road had an almost similar experience, only he overslept himself, so much so that he decided to wait, and go up in the evening. Thus also he escaped another gang, which was out after him.

There was grave suspicion against the Dak Bungalow Khansama at Pezu, of being in league with these gangs. Otherwise it was not apparent how they got to know when Officers were travelling. However, it could never be quite brought home to him, and he grew richer and fatter year by year, till in due course he retired and settled on his estate. Unfortunately he chose the site for the rich and reposeful afternoon of life rather too close to the border, and his quondam friends. These, knowing his wealth, and shrewdly suspecting that he sat and slept on a good portion of it, made a midnight raid on his house, and were under the painful necessity of shooting him dead before they eased him of his ill-gotten gains.

So perish the unrighteous—sometimes.

Stopping to light a pipe saved the life of another officer. He was walking down the Gomal Pass with an escort. These small escorts generally move with two men in front, then an interval of from one hundred to two hundred yards; then two more men, then another interval. Next comes the main body of the escort, behind that pairs of men at intervals as a rearguard. The officer was walking with the second pair of men from the front, and as he went started lighting a pipe. The match went out, and so did another, and another, before he got a light. Meanwhile both the first pair of soldiers, and the second pair, had disappeared round a spur which here ran into the Gomal river. Owing to the roar of the river not a sound was heard, but when the officer and the main body rounded the corner, they found that the first pair of soldiers had been shot dead; one of the second pair was also shot dead, and his companion badly wounded. If the officer had not stopped to light his pipe he would have been with the second pair, and almost certainly killed.

There is no lack of excitement on the North-West Frontier of India.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

Germany's Reward—A Gift from Spain—The War in the Philippines—On a Spanish Steamer—Running the Blockade—Iloilo—A Grandee of Spain—His Modest Price—The British Consul—Following the American Fleet to Manila—The Battle of Cavité—The Assembly of Neutral Fleets—Admiral Dewey—On the *Olympia*—German Bluster—The *Irene*—More Bluster—The Way to Deal with Germans—American and English Camaraderie—Sir Edward Chichester—A British Sailor All Over—The Bombardment of Manila—Shocked Teutons—An Old Fort—Gunnery 100 Years Ago and Now—Two Debts—The American Regulars—Discipline—"Alf"—A Visit to Aguinaldo—A Spanish Picquet—Their Little Joke

THOUGH this war took place nearly twenty years ago, a good deal of light has fallen recently on certain side issues connected with it. At the time most people looked on it as merely an accidental quarrel between America and Spain, which had something to do with Cuba. The rights and wrongs of the quarrel may have been, and probably were what they seemed, but it is curious to recall the fact now that the chief beneficiary, and that without firing a shot, was Germany.

We who were on the spot were somewhat puzzled at the attitude taken up by Germany. She had very slender ties with Spain, and had probably never given her a thought before. On the other hand, there was a very big German population in America and, as the Great War has since shown, one passionately attached to the Fatherland. The truculence of the Germans, and especially of the German Fleet, rather amused us than otherwise; it was so very *nouveau riche*, so vulgarly blatant. As

we have since discovered, this was to impress other neutrals, especially the British, an effort which signally failed. It was at the same time intended to impress the Spaniards with a feeling of gratitude. Here they were more successful, and as a result, whether from gratitude or pressure, it need not now be enquired, they received a handsome guerdon. The Caroline Islands were ceded by Spain to Germany. The whole incident was part of the German push for territorial acquisition, the raising of German prestige in the East, and incidentally the formation of coaling stations whence cruiser warfare could be waged on an enemy shipping, and especially on British.

Having, by the sweat of some years, accumulated three or four months' leave, the inspiration came that this period might be usefully and profitably employed in taking part in the Spanish-American War which was being waged in the Philippines. Equipped therefore with credentials for both belligerents, which it was not intended to use except in case of necessity, we set forth. When one is a recognised military attaché with either side, one is apt to be hunted and herded about under the cloak of courtesy and kindness, so that one sees little, or nothing, of the War. This was apparently the experience of officers in the Russo-Japanese War. So we went as plain travellers, and to heighten the delusion went *en famille*. The papers of recommendation and identification were kept in reserve. Just to avoid being hanged, or shot, by some hasty or impetuous person.

At Singapore we took ship in a small fast Spanish steamer, which, brimful of contraband, was going to run the blockade of the American Fleet, and land her stores at Iloilo, one of the main islands of the Philippine group. Before we started the American Consul at Singapore raised an objection to the ship

and her cargo ; and we had to lie by for a couple of days whilst the whole ship was unloaded, and then loaded up quickly again, with apparently precisely the same cargo. Then we slipped off.

Of course we expected some excitement on the way, for the American Consul had naturally notified the American Fleet. But our skipper took us by devious ways, and hid about behind islands, and other places of concealment ; and finally steamed safely into Iloilo harbour without sighting any of the enemy's cruisers. Round Iloilo a good deal of fighting was going on, but not of a very important or sanguinary nature. The chief centre of interest was up Manila way, so we determined to go there. To this end we craved an interview with a very magnificent person, a Hidalgo or Grandee of Spain at the least, but temporarily so far debasing himself as to be holding the menial post of Governor of the Island.

To him, through an interpreter, was preferred our request. It was a mercy he did not blow up ! Never was seen anyone so outraged, and so near an untimely end, from wrathful apoplexy. A very hot day too. The apoplectic fit translated into language, and thence into English, read :

"Assuredly this Englishman is somewhat more mad than all the rest of his nation. He must needs leave a comfortable home, and come to this god-forsaken hole, in the middle of a war. And, mark you, brings his wife with him ! Was there ever such insanity ?" (Great shrugging of shoulders and spreading of hands.) "But this is not all. Having learnt all our secrets and modes of defence, he now wishes to go over and betray us to the accursed Americans. Great God ! and the Blessed Virgin !"

We let him run on for quite a long time, and then made our apologies for so foolish a request, and retired.



On the way down the street the interpreter enquired insinuatingly :

“ How much present master will give ? ”

“ Present ? How much ? Great Heavens ! Bribe that great and good man, that magnificent patriot, that gorgeous hidalgo, that priceless prince ! Perchance we misheard you, friend Sancho Panzo ; be kind enough to repeat that remark.”

“ I only saying, Governor wanting present from English gentleman, and then English gentleman going quickly to Manila,” replied Sancho.

“ If you are speaking words of truth, my friend, what in your estimation would be a suitable present to make to His Excellency ? I should be sorry to insult him with too small a libation, nor, on the other hand, do I wish to spoil the market.”

“ Fifty rupees is plenty, Sar.”

Fifty rupees ! That is to say, three pounds six shillings and eightpence. It seemed a very moderate price for a Governor, a Grandee of Spain, or even a Hidalgo, and we prepared to spend it royally.

But we were saved even this modest outlay, for the British Consul, hearing that there were English people about, came to see us ; and by a great and glorious piece of good fortune he proved to be a brother of our own regimental doctor. From that time forth our difficulties disappeared ; and we shortly found ourselves on a small coasting steamer, which, directly she got to sea, discreetly hoisted the British flag, steaming in hot pursuit of Admiral Dewey's fleet. When we reached the vicinity of Manila Bay we heard the fleet had gone in, and that so far as anyone knew there were no mines, floating or otherwise ; and no sunken ships in the fairway. So our little cockleshell made bold to enter.

The entrance to the Bay is quite narrow, and a large Island, named Corregidor, divides even that



ADMIRAL DEWEY, COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN FLEET  
AT THE NAVAL BATTLE OF CAVITÉ, MAY 1, 1898



restricted channel. Both on Corregidor and on the mainland, were forts heavily armed. There was a half moon, and as the fleet crept slowly through in single file, there must have been many an anxious moment on the leading ship. But not a cat stirred, and the fleet passed through safely. As day strengthened, the Spanish Fleet was to be seen at anchor away to the south-east towards Cavité. Eleven ships in all. How they went to the bottom, at their anchorage, and with only a feeble show of resistance, is a matter of history.

Everyone now began to send squadrons to Manila Bay, just to demonstrate against each other; to brag and bluster, and pretend they had vital interests of some sort. England only was unrepresented, except by a little 1st class cruiser, the *Immortalité*, under Sir Edward Chichester. Yet, as Admiral Dewey said, "that little cruiser saved a European War in this Bay."

Admiral Dewey very courteously invited us on board his flagship and sent his pinnace to fetch us. A most pleasant, courteous host of great modesty and bearing. Wearing a moustache, to British eyes he looked more like a General than an Admiral, such is the effect of hirsute environment. The Admiral's cabin was in war trim—that is to say, dismantled and all woodwork removed, and was mostly occupied by a large gun. He told us how he had fought the battle of Cavité, and from where we stood on the decks of the *Olympia* the Spanish ships were visible quite close, mostly sunk in shallow water. On the side of the *Olympia* was painted a white circle, showing where the only shot had hit her. It was probably a light shell from a field battery on shore, for it had hardly made a dent. We were congratulating Admiral Dewey on his victory, and in chaff condoled with him for not belonging to a monarchy, because then he might have received

a peerage, as did Admiral Beauchamp. With great simplicity the Admiral waived the peerage aside.

"Oh! but the people at home are very kind and good to me. Look at all these little presents."

The little presents consisted of nothing more than could be bought with a few shillings or a few pence. But the kind-hearted old sailor appreciated them just as much as if they had been made of gold and silver, and set with precious stones. Later he was to receive more substantial proofs of the gratitude of his fellow-citizens.

The first international incident occurred when the German Fleet came sailing in with neither a "with-your-leave" nor "by-your-leave." This did not seem to Admiral Dewey a very correct procedure in a blockaded port; but, as he said, he was not very well up in the etiquette of the ocean, so he asked his friend, Sir Edward Chichester, for advice. Sir Edward, a stout old sailor of the best old stock, immediately replied that undoubtedly the German Fleet had no right to be there, except by courtesy of the blockading fleet. The Germans had no sea manners, he added.

"What ought I to do?" asked Admiral Dewey.

"Fire across his bows," replied Sir Edward Chichester with great bluntness.

In the course of two minutes whizz—z—z, bang, went a shot across the German's bows, and in an incredibly short space of time her fleet anchored hastily. Next was seen a steam pinnace, evidently in a great hurry, pushing off from the German Admiral's flagship, and scurrying towards the *Olympia*. In the pinnace were seated some very angry Germans. They were escorted courteously on board the *Olympia*, simply bursting with wrath, and with their feathers flying anyhow.

"Do you know, sir," exclaimed the infuriated



German emissary, "that this action of yours might entail war with the great German Empire?"

"I am perfectly aware of the fact," replied Admiral Dewey with great coolness and courtesy. Then hospitably invited his guests to assuage their wrath with a cocktail, or a mint julep.

But the German was not to be pacified with a cocktail, or even with a mint julep, and flounced himself off to report the matter to Wilhelm II.

"And do you know," said Admiral Dewey to us, "I'd never have risked it, if it hadn't been for that little British cruiser representing the British Fleet at my back."

The next incident was equally inflammatory. A few Spaniards remained on a small island, just off the town of Manila, and their surrender only being a matter of time and terms, the Americans did not trouble much about them. One morning, however, it was noticed that a German cruiser, the *Irene*, had shifted her berth, and was now anchored down alongside this island, as a sort of moral support to the Spaniards, and menace to the Americans.

"What ought I to do?" asked Admiral Dewey of his friend the English captain.

"Do?" replied Sir Edward. "Why just clear two of your battleships for action, and bear down on the *Irene*, and tell her that if she isn't out of that in five minutes you'll sink her."

"And I acted like that," Admiral Dewey remarked with great relish.

"I cleared the *Boston* and the *Raleigh* for action, and bore down on the *Irene*, and would you believe it, she was in such an all-fired hurry to clear away that she slipped her cable! He is a fine fellow that Captain Chichester of yours."

Sir Edward Chichester, tenth Baronet, was a great burly man who looked like a typical English squire, and was possessed of most of the best quali-

ties of a naval officer. He knew his job from A to Z ; he had unbounded belief in the power of the British Navy, and looked on with perfectly calm, mixed with amused tolerance, at the impassioned antics of the "Dagos." He died as a Rear-Admiral in 1906, leaving behind the record of a stout seaman, who knew how to act when confronted by great responsibilities, where any mistake might have had world-wide consequences.

There was yet one other occasion on which the spirit of comradeship between the British and the American fleets was shown. Admiral Dewey gave the Spaniards up to eleven o'clock on a certain morning to surrender the town of Manila ; and if not surrendered at that hour and on the date settled, he would bombard the town. A lot of busy neutrals, led by the Germans, thereupon began fussing and fuming around, trying to formulate language to express his baseness. This makes curious reading nowadays ! Finally, these neutrals had a meeting, and, headed by the German Admiral, went to interview Sir Edward Chichester with a view to ascertaining his views on the subject, and further, to enquire what the British intended to do. Sir Edward listened to them with great patience and affability, and heard unmoved the blood-curdling story of the atrocities which the Americans were about to commit. With the help of his steward he even soothed them with his national drinks. But when pressed as to his views and intentions, he blandly replied :

"Those, sirs, are known only to Admiral Dewey and myself. Good morning, gentlemen, good morning."

The final touch came when the fatal morn had arrived. All foreign fleets were ordered to weigh, and clear to the north'ard out of the line of fire, before 10 a.m. Each in their turn up-anchored and

cleared away ; till last of all, and alone, was left H.M.S. *Immortalité*. Very slowly, and with great deliberation, the *Immortalité*, every glass in every fleet on her, hauled up her anchor. Dead slow she followed the foreign fleets for a short and calculated distance ; then slowly turned, and making a wide deliberate sweep, came back and anchored alongside the American Fleet. Could the highest diplomacy do more ? The Americans evidently thought not, for as the little *Immortalité* passed along, one huge cheer went up from every American ship.

As the appointed hour arrived, Admiral Dewey began to get anxious ; he had no wish and probably no intention of bombarding the town of Manila, but the Spanish flag still flew and there was no sign of surrender. So by way of hastening the Spaniards a little in their deliberations, he opened fire on an old fort which lay some distance outside the town. It was then discovered that the Spaniards had raised the white flag as directed, but as the wind was blowing straight away from the fleet, it had not been earlier distinguished.

Examining that old fort afterwards, a curious development in the science of gunnery and the penetration of shells was observable. In the old days, more than a century before, the British had attacked that fort with the guns of the day, and the marks could clearly be seen. They had just made a dent in the wall, crumbled the stone a little, and then had fallen back harmless into the ditch. The modern shell had not only penetrated the near wall, but had crossed the fort and gone clean through the far wall.

As a matter of history, Manila and the Philippine Islands, probably according to the strict letter of the law, still belong to Great Britain. For at the general settling up after the Napoleonic Wars, we sold the Philippines to Spain for some small sum of

money, £2,500,000 I believe, and that sum has never been paid.

It is much the same with a Portuguese Debt. Portugal owes us £8,000,000 for sums advanced during the Peninsular War. On April 1st of each year that debt is solemnly acknowledged to the British Government, and as solemnly acknowledged and carried to next year. It has thus carried on for a century, and it occurred to us soldiers during the South African War that the Portuguese might very handsomely have wiped off the debt in exchange for Delagoa Bay.

There were a great number of British sailors, and especially stokers, in the American Fleet, and these put on an extra strong Yankee accent when speaking to us. One who had a specially strong accent, however, privately dropped it when we were alone, and told us that he had been at Rugby School, and had only recently taken on at Hong Kong "just to see a bit of fun."

On shore there was a very great difference between the regulars of the American Army and the Volunteers. The former were very good indeed, very smart and well trained, and with the strictest discipline. All old soldiers of the best type. The Volunteers were mostly hastily raised citizens who could just march decently in fours, but to whom the word discipline had little meaning. When a colonel, a sergeant, and a bugler may be seen sitting down to dinner together at an hotel it must be difficult, though perhaps not impossible, to keep the slender but very strong chain of discipline taut. Our own Colonial troops suffered from the same trouble at the beginning of the Great War, and perhaps is illustrated by a little story I sent home at the time, and which was with variations quoted and illustrated in several papers.

A Colonial regiment was about to be inspected

by the General, and previously the Colonel did earnestly enjoin and beseech his men to turn out in a smart and soldier-like manner, and to behave as such. And he added :

“For God’s sake, boys, don’t call me Alf before the General.”

After the occupation of Manila we went to live in the town, and had rather a thin time as far as food and accommodation went ; and both of us came back looking like scarecrows ; at least so our friends told us. However, we had not finished yet, for directly peace had been made between the Americans and the Spaniards, a new war broke out between the Americans and the Filippinos, as the Philippine Islanders are called. We thought we might as well see a little of this new development. One day, therefore, Admiral Dewey was asked if it was permissible to go over to the enemy. Somewhat to our surprise he raised no difficulties whatever ; he merely said :

“Go, right away, if they’ll let you.”

So two of us Englishmen, one of whom could speak the language, sallied forth unarmed to try their luck. We got out of the American lines without anyone taking much notice, and then bumped into a Filippino picquet, which happily did not shoot first and make enquiries afterwards. On the contrary, they said : “Are you Americano or Inglis ? ” The reply was given with great promptitude and truth, “Inglis.” Then a long palaver between the Englishmen and the Filippino commandant, wherein, by the courtesy of one of them, the other was described as a British Officer of commanding rank and merit, who was so impressed with the military genius of Aguinaldo, the insurgent leader, that he wished to lay the tribute of his



admiration at his feet, and had travelled all the way from India to do so. They possibly concluded he had come to place his sword and military genius at their service, and they were consequently most civil to the adventurers.

Henceforth no obstacles were placed in our way, and we were sent by train, without even the formality of taking tickets, to Malolos, where lay Aguinaldo's headquarters. No guard was placed on us, though a soldier or two kept an eye on the carriage at each station. At Malolos we were received with every courtesy, and were introduced to Aguinaldo. A young half-breed of twenty-nine, who for years had headed the rebellion against the Spaniards, and frequently defeated them; and who was now trying to expel the Americans from the Island. The Englishmen were allowed to roam about perfectly freely, and no one took much notice of them, except to be exceedingly civil. Perhaps one remark made by Aguinaldo may account in part, or wholly, for this liberal treatment. One day in conversation he said: "I would surrender to the British to-morrow, and hand over the Government of these Islands to them, for I have been to Singapore and Hong Kong and seen how good and clean their Government is. They know how to govern Asiatics, but I would not come under the Spaniards, and won't submit to the Americanos."

Nor did he, though after years of guerilla warfare he was captured through a ruse by the Americans, and deported to the United States on a liberal pension.

One more story may perhaps be told about the Philippine War. On a certain day, by way of improving their military minds, two Englishmen were strolling round the Spanish outpost line, and happened to chance across a small picquet, consisting of a Sergeant and three men. At the moment

of their arrival the men were having their midday meal, to wash which down the sergeant was issuing to each a ration of red wine. He very hospitably offered the Englishmen a drink, which was gladly accepted ; though as it was a very hot day they asked that a little water might be added. This was evidently considered a capital joke, for all four burst into roars of laughter.

“ Wherefore this merriment ? ” asked the Englishmen in some bewilderment.

“ Pardon us, sir,” said the Sergeant, “ but I will explain. That wine is a very good wine, and comes from Barcelona. It starts off in large casks addressed to the Adjutant-General. Out of each cask the Adjutant-General makes two, and hands it on to our Colonel. Our Colonel out of these two diluted casks makes three. Next the Company Commander has to make his profit, and I also have to make mine. So you see, sir, there is not much need to add any more water ! No doubt it is better thus in a warm climate ! ”<sup>1</sup>

The three privates listened with broad grins to this recital. One could not help picturing the look of horror and indignation which would have come over the face of Thomas Atkins and Jack Tar if he had heard of similar liberties being taken with his liquor.

<sup>1</sup> *The Philippines and Round About*, by Major G. J. Younghusband.

## CHAPTER XI

### SOME ADVENTURES IN THE BOER WAR

Sir Hector MacDonald—Stopped by Telegram—Success after many Endeavours—Arrival in England—Lord George Hamilton—Sir Dighton Probyn *Deus ex machina*—Lord Scarbrough—His Unselfish Patriotism—The 3rd Imperial Yeomanry—Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire Combine—The Best of Regiments—Trekking with Lord Methuen—In Pursuit of De Wet—Lindley—A Tight Corner—Lord Chesham's Brigade—Capture of Villebois de Mareuil's Commando—Surprising a Boer Commando—Charging a Kopje—The Two Yeomen—A Wound—The Man Fours—Lady Galway's Knife—Seventeen Pieces in him and yet Lived—Sixteen Best Girls—Boer Women—The Comely Daughter—And the Persuasive Subaltern—A Rider Follows us—The Comely Daughter Again—Her Information—Her Night March Tied to the Interpreter—The Surprisers Surprised—The Bird Flown—The Revenge of Jealousy—We Picket a Farm—Remarkably Handsome Daughters—The Blood's Attentions—Also the Major's—The Intercepted Letter—A Reply that Got Through—Bloodstained Clothes and Frills—A Palatial Farm—We Sit Heavily On It—A Tall and Bounteous Female—We Meet Again at a Dinner Party

IT is exceedingly difficult to be allowed to take part in some wars, and such was my experience with regard to the Boer War. Whilst serving on the Staff of Sir Hector MacDonald, at Umballa, in the autumn of 1899, a telegram arrived appointing Sir Hector to command the Highland Brigade in South Africa, in succession to General Wauchope, who had been killed in action. The telegram added that he might take one Officer with him. Sir Hector, with the telegram in his hand, asked :

“ Would you care to come ? ”

An answer was almost superfluous, and we set to work to sell our goods and pack our kits.

At the very last moment, at the railway station, came a telegram :

“ Major Younghusband is not to go.”

So that famous fellow and old friend, Watty Ross, took the vacant place, and he and Sir Hector departed for South Africa.

Wearily wending my way back to the hotel, I sent a wire enquiring why I was not allowed to go.

The reply came :

“ By Indian Army Regulations, Vol. XXIII, para. 743 (or thereabouts), an Officer holding a Staff appointment may not volunteer for service.”

To this went the rejoinder :

“ I respectfully beg to be allowed to resign my Staff appointment.”

Back came the shuttlecock :

“ By Indian Army Regulations, Vol. XXIV, para. 1065, you are not allowed to resign a Staff appointment.”

The situation clearly required different handling. I had had no furlough for nine years, ever since leaving the Staff College, so the next telegram was worded :

“ Shall be grateful for one year's furlough. Official application follows by post.”

On the heels of this went a private wire to every single Officer, and there were many, through whom the application would pass, asking them most kindly to expedite it.

Next day the welcome wire arrived :

“ Leave sanctioned.”

So off we started for England.

At Port Said a telegram from my father met us :

“Come on sharp. Appointment awaiting you.”

On we went, therefore, as sharp as the P. and O. mail could take us, but on arriving at Charing Cross were met by long faces.

“Very sorry, the Indian Government won't let you go to South Africa.”

Clearly the next thing was to tackle the Indian Government. This was late Sunday night, but the first thing on Monday morning I went and called at the India Office on Lord George Hamilton, then Secretary of State for India.

Lord George was exceedingly kind and nice and sympathetic, but he said that though Lord Roberts himself had applied for fifty Cavalry Officers of the Indian Army by name, the Indian Government could not spare them.

This did not look very promising, but it is wise to never say die.

The next step was to Marlborough House to see Sir Dighton Probyn. Sir Dighton was an old friend of my father, and had always been more than kind to me. To him the situation was explained. Here was an Officer on a year's furlough, and he might just as well be fighting Boers as kicking his heels about in London. Sir Dighton fully agreed, and said he would do what he could. And he succeeded, though, as he told me years afterwards, he had a severe tussle with Lord Wolseley, who was then Commander-in-Chief. Needless to say, my gratitude was unbounded. I accordingly went to South Africa, the envied of hundreds of Indian Army Officers.

When after the Black Week, as it was called, owing to some minor reverses in South Africa, it was decided to raise 10,000 Yeomen for service against the Boers, amongst others selected to raise and command a regiment was Lord Scarbrough. He ac-



cepted the honour and responsibility with much diffidence, at the same time giving it as his opinion that no one but a professional soldier ought to be entrusted with the lives of five hundred of his fellows in battle. As a matter of fact, Lord Scarbrough had been a regular himself, and had until recently served in the 7th Hussars.

"Quite so," said the War Office, "but there are no regular Officers to spare. They are all employed."

At that exact moment I happened to arrive home from India, on a year's leave. Lord Scarbrough saw my name in the paper, and at once went to the War Office and said :

"Well, anyway, here is one spare man."

So I was appointed to command the regiment, and Lord Scarbrough then said :

"Will you take me out as second-in-command?"

That was as patriotic and noble an act as man could perform. It contrasts nicely with the professional parvenu, who will down his best friend to what he calls "get on."

The regiment was the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, and was composed of picked squadrons from the Yorkshire Hussars, Yorkshire Dragoons, South Notts Hussars, and Sherwood Rangers.

That was one of the best regiments and the nicest lot of officers I have ever commanded. A regiment in which, besides Lord Scarbrough, were dear old Dick Gascoigne, Beresford-Peirse, the two Birkins, Bertie Wilson, Bertie Sheriffe, and 518 other fine fellows, was bound to be a good one.

In writing of the South African War let us eschew the big battles; we have all read about them, and let us just trek along with a column, and see what adventures we may chance across.

One day as we were trekking with Lord Methuen, a despatch rider arrived from Lord Roberts saying, that one of the newly-raised Yeomanry regiments,

the "Millionaires' Own" as it was called, was in great straits at Lindley in the Orange River Colony, and that we were to do our best to extricate it. We were then forty-two miles from Lindley, and setting off at once, covered the distance in one trek. But alas! on nearing Lindley we were met with the unfortunate news that the regiment had already been captured by greatly superior numbers.

However, we pushed on to see what we could do, and found De Wet with his captives, in full retreat towards Bethlehem, through very hilly country. Our regiment, the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, was sent in pursuit, and an excessively warm time we had of it.

A few miles beyond Lindley we came up with De Wet's rearguard with two guns, which held us off for a time. Then we made a detour round to our left, and taking ridge after ridge, found ourselves on the flank of the retreating Boers. The Boer force was about 3000 strong, and at the point of impact we counted on cutting off sixteen wagons, two guns, and, we hoped, the prisoners. Just, however, as we were turning inwards to make our charge, we suddenly came across a precipice, about twenty-five feet drop, down which was apparently no path, and the face of which was fully exposed to the Boer fire.

Our blood was up, and somehow or other thirty-six of us scrambled down the sheer wall on foot, and had our horses shoo-ed down after us. At the bottom was a nullah which gave us welcome shelter for a moment's breather; then mounting our horses we formed in single rank with a good interval, and issuing from the nullah, charged four hundred yards across the open, cut off the convoy and guns, and took the kopje beyond. All our captures sneaked down into a nullah between us and Lindley, and we hoped that we had cut in far enough up to rescue the prisoners too. At this moment, however, one of them came running back on foot and said:

"They are all just on there, on carts, not a hundred yards beyond where you cut in."

"Go and tell them to clear. We'll hold on here to cover them," we told him.

The man went, but shortly came back to say they had all gone, and just round the corner was a commando of Boers who had now intervened.

That being so it was now about time to think of ourselves. On top of a forty-two mile march we had been fighting all day, we had lost three out of four of our squadron-commanders, forty odd men, and seventy-two horses, killed or wounded; and we stood at this extreme point, only thirty-six all told, in the midst of a perfect hornets' nest of Boers. At this moment I was just having a chat with the Adjutant on the subject, and he was giving me a light from his cigarette, when a bullet tipped the Kafir kraal wall we were leaning against, and passed between his face and mine, and certainly not three inches from either.

"Well, unless we want to go home in an ambulance, we had better be shifting," we both agreed.

And a nice ticklish job that was! The way it was done was for one half to race back to occupy a kopje in rear, and then for the other half to clear out fast, so as to get under shelter before the Boers were up on the vacated hill. We laid an ambush or two as well. That is, we left a stout-hearted pair on the rear kopje, whilst the rest galloped away. Up came Johnny Boer, and got it in the face. Then quickly to horse the pair, and off.

One infernal fellow, with a yellow cat's skin round his hat, had a captured Yeoman with him, whom he used as a shield and stalking-horse, pushing him on in front, and firing from behind him. A sovereign was offered by some sportsman to anyone who would shoot the yellow-banded ruffian, and the poor Yeoman had an extraordinarily bad time of it

whilst competition for this sovereign was going on. At the very last moment, however, we got the yellow gent. He was squatting on the ground shooting, making the Yeoman stand in front and hold his horse. Unfortunately for him he was slightly sideways on to where we were, and we got him through the head at 400 yards ; and the Yeoman nipped on to the horse, and came in to us.

Eventually we got out of the fight all right, but a bit war-worn. There was one mare, the Sergeant-Major's, with seven bullets through her, fourteen holes counting in and out. The Sergeant-Major was a great burly fellow, but she carried him home all right, and only died at her standings that night. Brave and gallant charger !

We were rather amused at an Orderly who came from Lord Chesham, who was commanding the Brigade, with a message. He was exceedingly heated, and somewhat agitated, when he arrived, and exclaimed :

" My God ! I have come through hell to bring this message ! "

" All right, sonny ; stop here, and have a bit of a rest."

" Not I ! " said he. " Not much, this is worse than hell ! Got any answer ? I'm off back to Lord Chesham."

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On another occasion, when we were lying at Boshoff, a Kafir came in to say that a Boer commando was resting at a farm about nine miles off. So out went the Brigade under Lord Chesham to round it up. But when it got there, no signs of brother Boer were to be seen. The force was therefore about to turn round and go home, thinking it was yet another false scent, when someone noticed a few loose ponies grazing. Lord Methuen ordered



these to be rounded up before marching home, and then the fun began ! For the kopje beyond was full of the enemy, and suddenly a furious fusillade burst out from it. Lord Methuen at once made his dispositions for attack, sending some of the Yeomen round to the right, and some to the left, whilst the rest went straight in at the centre, and the guns played on the crest.

The Yeomen dashed across about 800 yards of open, on foot, stormed the position with fixed bayonets, and great gallantry, losing several officers and a good many men. But the whole of the enemy commando was killed, wounded, or captured. This accomplished, what was everybody's surprise to find that this was a French commando, under the celebrated Villebois de Mareuil, on its way to wreck the railway between Cape Colony and Kimberley. Villebois de Mareuil was amongst the slain, and Lord Methuen ordered his body to be taken in to Boshoff, and buried there with full military honours. We were all devoted to Lord Methuen.

There was a curious story connected with Villebois de Mareuil's signet ring. It was noticed by several people on his finger, and the intention, of course, was that it should be buried with him. Some days afterwards, however, one of our officers, Colonel Lance Rolleston, happened to be in Kimberley, and was poking about buying odds and ends, when in a sort of jeweller's shop he was offered a signet ring for sale. It looked to him singularly like the ring Villebois de Mareuil was wearing when killed, so out of curiosity he bought it. Enquiries were then made regarding the crest of this distinguished French family, and this proved to be the crest on the ring. It was thus definitely identified as the property of the dead French Officer, but how it got out of his grave into a pawnshop is a mystery still unsolved. After the War a deputation from the regiment, under



Colonel Lance Rolleston, went over to Paris, and handed back the ring to the family of Villebois de Mareuil, as a token of regard for a brave enemy.

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One more little scrap. We had made an early start, and, just as we crested a rise, a sight met our eyes which they had long thirsted for. A Boer commando surprised, and hastily breaking up laager. It was some miles away, but in the clear South African air looked quite close, especially with field-glasses. One could almost hear the men swearing as they thrust their bullocks under the yokes. Our orders were to go in and "freeze on to them" until the other columns could come up. So off we went, two weak squadrons only, to freeze on to the redoubtable De Wet with a couple of thousand pretty tough birds under his command. We made straight for him at a good steady trot, and all the small parties he sent out to meet and stay us fell back without dismounting or shooting. There was not time.

At length we reached a particularly forbidding line of kopjes, behind which the departing laager lay. We had been so long at that war by now that we knew almost instinctively exactly what points the Boers would be holding. We therefore singled out the most prominent kopje, which, if taken, broke his line of defence. We were closing up on this, still at a trot, and were scarce three hundred yards from it, when we espied that well-known and oft-accursed obstacle, a barbed wire fence. But by this time we were pretty slippery at overcoming that sort of thing; the advance scouts with wire cutters had it down in a minute, so that we scarcely had to check.

Still not a shot or sound from that forbidding kopje. Checking the squadrons momentarily to a walk, a troop was sent at a gallop round to the left, and another round to the right. Then the tornado

burst. We saw the left-hand troop at once in difficulties, having struck a bog at the same moment that the enemy opened on it, at close range. The right troop for one flash we saw against the skyline, and then it seemed to meet a blizzard, and withered away, and died mostly. They had done their work nobly, these two, and now it was up to us, and up the slope we went as hard as God would let us ; and just at the ridge, and not thirty yards from the enemy, we came on a pocket made for us, a piece of dead ground just big enough to hold us. In five seconds we were off our horses, over the ridge, and at them with the bayonet, for we had no swords or lances which we could have used on horseback. That cleared up that lot.

But straight ahead was another kopje which commanded ours, and which it was imperative to take, so we doubled on and took it ; but the Boers were getting thicker and thicker and stronger and stronger, and we thinner and thinner and weaker and weaker. Before we could dig on further we wanted more men, so the Adjutant wrote a note, and a Yeoman was sent off with it, whilst we kept his rifle for an Officer to use. No signs of more men. So another Yeoman was sent with another note. Still no result. Then went the Adjutant, and he also disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him ; and still no reinforcements. Then I thought I had better go myself, and see what was up.

As I strolled across the neck between the two kopjes I suddenly came across the corpse of a Yeoman, and was just thinking, "That accounts for it, poor devil," when the corpse's eyes suddenly turned towards me.

"Hullo ! hit, are you ? Badly ? "

"No, sir, I ain't 'it, but the fire across this neck is that awful I thought I'd better wait a bit." He was a recruit, and it was his first fight.

" Oh ! it isn't so bad as all that ; you come along with me and see."

So on we went, we two, with many a duck and bob on the part of the Yeoman ; when lo and behold ! we came across a second Yeoman corpse. And he, curiously enough, said exactly the same as the first. However, we gathered him in, and all three went on and talked about Yorkshire, bobbing and bowing a good deal on the way. Then one of the Yeomen got a bullet through his hat, whilst the wire fence alongside got cut in two with a whang by another bullet ; and so we gratefully arrived under shelter. There I found my friend the Adjutant, and hailed him :

" Hullo ! what became of you ? "

" Became of me ? Nothing. I have been twenty minutes trying to get these blamed led horses round the corner, and each time we are met by a hurricane, and half a dozen horses down."

" Never mind the horses, push up all the men you can on foot, like a good lad." And up they went.

Meanwhile I sauntered over to see what the machine-gun fellow was up to, as a deadly silence reigned from that direction. I understood him to say that " it was too hot " for him, and was just proceeding to point out the extreme opposite, when suddenly I felt as if someone had kicked me very hard on the shin.

" A splinter of stone on the shin, I think," turning to the Adjutant.

" You may perhaps have a stone on the shin," he replied judiciously, " but you are certainly bleeding like a bullock in the thigh."

And so I was ; and a long and troublous story that was, which lasted me four years.

However, I got shelter under a wall, and lit a pipe, and carried on as best I could, though I was rather immobile for a Cavalry Officer. After some

time the doctor came and bound me up, and then they poked me into a shelf in an Ambulance wagon, with about a dozen other wounded, and we were carted to a neighbouring farm and there left ; for the columns were moving quickly and could not carry wounded with them. They couldn't get me into the door without hurting me a lot, so they unshipped the window, and poked me in that way, right on to a splendid bed, quite clean and with brass posts. The men were put into another room and along the veranda ; whilst our unwilling hosts, a Boer woman with a lot of children, varying from eighteen to six, occupied the two remaining rooms. The only one who made a fuss was a Boer, not at all badly hit, who groaned, and moaned, and cried all night ; whilst my men, some pretty badly wounded, never uttered a sound.

There was one man particularly I made enquiries after next morning. He had one of those big knives which contain every conceivable thing from a corkscrew to a pair of scissors, which Lady Galway had given to all the men before they started. This he carried on a chain attached to his trouser button. Just as we were galloping into the Boers this knife got adrift from his pocket and was banging his thigh. So, as we went, he picked it up, and poked it into the top of his trousers. Almost immediately after a bullet hit it at about twenty yards' range, and carried the whole thing into him, all that was left outside being the chain and the hoof-picker. The doctor didn't give him till the morning to live. I was therefore greatly surprised, as well as pleased, to get my batman's report :

" Well, sir, he says he feels a bit stiff, but he slept very well indeed, and feels very hungry ! "

A month after, when we had all got well enough to make a shift, we bribed a Boer with a £5 note to get us an ox wagon, and in this we bumped un-



easily, by easy stages, forty miles into Vereeniging, where we appeared as ghosts from the dead. There they put the Röntgen rays on to our friend with the knife, and found it split up into no less than seventeen pieces, embedded in him. After the end of the war we were staying with Lady Scarborough in Yorkshire, and a bazaar was being held at the house for the church steeple, or some other charity. My job was to beat the big drum outside the fortune-teller's tent to attract customers. Amongst others attracted was an old woman who looked very hard at me, and said :

“ You're Colonel Younghusband, ain't you ? ”

I said I was.

“ My son wants to see you, he's got something for you.”

“ That's very nice ; tell him to roll up.”

The old woman went off, and shortly returned tugging along—Who do you think ? Yeoman Fours, the man with the seventeen pieces of a knife in him !

“ Yes, sir, I've got a photograph of myself with them all there. But the doctors got 'em all out ; and I've given sixteen of 'em away as souvenirs—to girls and that like ” (with some bashfulness), “ but I kep' one for you, sir.”

He had ridden over eighteen miles on a bicycle to see me, and was strong and well again, and the overseer in some neighbouring works.

. . . . .

The Boer women hated us with a pure and unalloyed, albeit carefully-concealed, hatred, and only once did we come across a case where other feelings overruled this passion. We were hot-foot after a man named Conyers, who, with a small commando, had been giving a good deal of trouble. One day we came to a farm where we outspanned for our midday halt. There was the old dopper, his old frau, and a



decidedly comely daughter. So we put our best-looking and most persuasive subaltern on to the comely daughter ; whilst the Intelligence Officer took on the old dopper, and our tidy Major the mamma. But all were equally unsuccessful, and more especially so the good-looking subaltern. He said he had never come up against such a blank wall ; and as to Conyers and his commando, it got blanker than ever when he came to that. So, after a couple of hours, we trekked on and hoped for the best.

It was getting on towards evening, and we were getting near the end of our day's trek, when we espied in the far distance a streak of dust, and a single horseman riding after us. As it got nearer we were surprised to see the rider wearing a sun-bonnet, and discovered it was a woman, and finally recognised the comely daughter of the last farm.

" I want to see the Commandant of this commando."

" Yes, here I am ; what do you want ? "

" Conyers is expected at our farm to-night, and if you come back before dawn you will catch him."

" And you ? "

" I must hasten back, or they'll miss me."

Here was rather a ticklish question. The whole affair might be a plant, and the good lady trying to entice us back into an ambush. On the other hand, if her story was true, and we kept her, her absence might put all on the alert and defeat our plans that way. However, on the whole we thought we had better keep her, and most unladylike remarks she made on hearing this. We waited till dark, and then turned on our tracks ; the lady's horse firmly tied to that of the Interpreter, with the good-looking subaltern as escort on the other side. After some hours we got back to the farm and silently surrounded it, and awaited the dawn. The girl was fast

asleep, but had evidently been weeping bitterly. Poor dear.

Dawn was heralded by the crack of a rifle, a bullet missing us by an extraordinarily few inches, and flattened itself with a crack against a rock in front. "Some infernal careless fellow letting off his rifle by mistake," and we cursed him inwardly. But quite a little hail of bullets followed, all from the rear, and a man was hit. It did not want a very intelligent person to grasp what was up. Conyers was outside the net, and we had one foot in it! A nasty few minutes ensued before we got some men together and slipped them round to turn the kopje the shots came from. The firing now ceased, and we shortly saw our men on top. Then we took the farm, but not a soul was in or near it except the old dopper and his frau. They went at us like furies for having abducted their daughter. But we could not stop to wrangle, and left the girl to tell such lies as seemed good unto her. Then, tired though our horses were after twenty-four hours on end, we pushed on after the Boers.

Later the whole story came out. Conyers apparently had been courting the comely girl, and she loved him fiercely. It came, however, to her ears that he had thrown her over, and was now sitting up by candle-light with another girl. So, not unlike Jael, the wife of our old and valued friend Heber the Kenite, she determined to sacrifice him. That we did not succeed in furthering her wishes was due to the young Boer's astuteness. For instead of staying at the farm he lay a mile off, camped in a snug hollow. At dawn he was making off when he saw us, and fired a few shots into our backs from bravado. We never saw the girl again, though we passed that way often.

. . . . .

On the other hand, we had several experiences with Boer women of quite another character, notably at a certain farm not a thousand miles from Cape Town. Here we had to halt for some days awaiting events ; and meanwhile, with the country swarming with Boers and their spies, a weak column had to be particularly careful, lest its numbers and dispositions should get known. To this end we carefully picketed the farm to ensure that no news should get out ; and we also kept a sharp look-out on the Kafir kraal close by, to prevent any of the Kafirs getting away with a message. All the Boer men-folk of the farm were out fighting against us, and at the farm remained only mamma and, to our jaded and war-worn eyes, what looked like, and perhaps were, two remarkably handsome daughters. Possibly the illusion was heightened by pink sun-bonnets, a very becoming headpiece for the plainest old horse. Directly these girls were discovered, it was most interesting to notice what much more frequent visits to the farm had to be paid, on various pretexts, by all our most beautiful bloods.

At breakfast might be heard one artless young man addressing the Mess President :

“ I say, Major, didn't I hear you say we were short of eggs ? I'll just run up to the farm and see if they have got any.”

When he returned at 12 noon, the Mess President hailed him : “ Well, how about those eggs ? ”

“ Oh ! sorry, I clean forgot all about them.” Pink sun-bonnets.

At lunch another bright star would discover that we had no butter, or that it was not good, and the only thing was to go up to the farm and see about it.

Even quite a respectable Field Officer with an eyeglass, and a family at home, might be seen carrying up buckets of water from the pond, a good 400 yards, to the farm.

Two of the bloods were apparently specially favoured, and went up very often. They said the girls were jolly glad to see them ; it was so deadly dull up there all alone ; they hoped they would come often ; and, funnily enough, added that they had an intense love and admiration for British Officers.

A few days after, one of the men on picket round the Kafir kraal brought in a note, which he had found on a Kafir who was sneaking off with it. It read as follows :—

“ DEAR PIET,

“ I love you very much. I hope you love me still. The Rooineks are still camped here, but there are very few of them, and only one gun. I have counted not more than 200 horses down at water. I think there are not more than 150 Rooineks. The English Officers often come up to the farm to buy milk and eggs, which we have to sell them, but they don't mind what they pay. A shilling for a bottle of milk. There are two that come more regularly ; we feel inclined to spit in their faces, the loathsome cowards and murderers of our kinsfolk, but we hope to get information out of them, etc. etc. etc.

“ KAROLINE.”

When our two pet bloods saw that letter they were, for a time, feeling a little discomposed. But the British subaltern is not easily defeated, and, between them, they concocted a gem from Piet to Karoline, which they smuggled, with extraordinary cunning, through the Kafir kraal into the farm. It ran :

“ DEAR KAROLINE,

“ Thou accursed woman ! Thou hast read the story of Rahab, and like her, made friends with the enemies of the Lord. Have I not heard how thou

hast taken as thy lover the rich Major with the glass eye, that thou mayest live in his palace in London, and scoff at us poor Boers. And now thou attemptest to betray us into the hands of the accursed Rooineks by falsely telling us they are weak and leading us into an ambush. But our Commandant is too slim for that. May the curse of God be on you.

“ PIET.”

The next day we went on trek, and never saw Karoline again, or, to our knowledge, Piet.

. . . . .

War and peace, bloodstained clothes and silks and frills, got strangely mixed at times. Towards the end of the war we were working, as one of a chain of columns under Sir John French, clearing Cape Colony of Boers and rebels. We were given a list of farms whose owners had turned rebels, and told to sit heavily on them. In other words, clear them of all stock and supplies, which helped to support and keep going the enemy, both rebels and Boers. One day we reached a large farm at the hour of the midday halt, and the Intelligence Officer informed us that this was one of the proscribed farms; that the owner and his two brothers were out with a rebel commando, whilst the wife remained at home, and sent them out supplies and information. It was quite a big place, more like a good-sized English country house than a colonial farm, with English furniture, a ball-room, and conservatories.

We outspanned close by, and a polite invitation to breakfast came from our unwilling hostess. However, it is difficult to breakfast first with a lady and then lay her waste. So we politely declined, and, setting a guard on the house to protect her and her household goods, we set to work to clear up the crops and cattle. Time was short, and we really inflicted



no great loss, but, such as it was, it was doubtless highly annoying to the lady of the house. Anyway, as we marched away we saw a tall and bounteous female, arrayed in a black dress, with a large and opulent hat, standing in the veranda, and gloomily watching us. In reality, she was probably counting the exact number of men, guns, and wagons in the column !

We were trekking for about a month or more, on and off, before working in to Beaufort-West again. There one night the General asked me to dinner, and who should be my partner, but the very same magnificent lady whose farm had been harried ! She recognised me at once, and I her, and we learnt afterwards that she had come in, during a lull in her activities, to make a bitter and heart-rending complaint against our column, and to demand a liberal compensation ! We got on perfectly well at dinner, and she told me her boy had been at Eton, but was withdrawn when the war began ; that she herself used to go nearly every year to London and Paris. A very pleasant lady, but with a somewhat perverted idea as to what a lady, and a subject of His Most Gracious Majesty, may, or may not do, in time of war.

Next morning, as in duty bound, we went off on trek to try to kill or capture the husband and two brothers of the bounteous lady in the large hat, they being rebels against the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOUTH AFRICAN JOTTINGS

Lord Methuen—A Sahib of the Deepest Dye—Who is a Sahib?—The Column Commander—"Eternal Damnation to Steyn and De Wet"—A Motley Column—Caton Woodville Pictures—And How They Panned Out—A Treacherous Shot—The Rapsallion Squadron—The Lord Mayor and Burghers—The Column Commander Speaks—The Daily Double Trek—Attacking the Kopjes—The Red-haired Boer—"Don't Shoot the Poor Devil"—The Column Commander's Last Trek—Rudyard Kipling—His Greeting—Cecil Rhodes—His Quest—Rudyard Kipling's Great Achievement—The Yeomen Cheer Rudyard Kipling and Cecil Rhodes—Their Modest Departure—Baden-Powell—Some Old Stories—His Reception in Cape Town—His Buttons Cut Off—Shot into Government House—An Honest Helper—Far-reaching Effect of Defence of Mafeking

**L**ORD METHUEN was once described as "A Sahib of the deepest dye," and all we who served under him in South Africa heartily agree with that verdict. It perhaps does not convey so much to people in England as to those who have served out and about the world, and in India. One of the greatest tributes to the English character, and to the cleanness of British rule in India, is found in that simple small word "Sahib," which originally meant little different to "Esquire." All Englishmen in India for generations have been called "Sahibs," and yet though there are, as elsewhere, good, bad, and indifferent Englishmen, that word has not deteriorated. On the other hand, it has greatly increased in honour and value. You will hear an Indian say of some exceptionally good Officer:

"Ah, yes, he is a true Sahib."

You will hear an Englishman say of another whom he likes and respects :

“ He’s a Sahib.”

Incidentally inferring in that brief sentence that he possesses all the best qualities of a British Officer and English gentleman. To describe, therefore, an Officer as was Lord Methuen as “ a Sahib of the deepest dye ” means a very great deal.

It has nothing to do with rank or wealth. A peer of the realm is not necessarily a “ Sahib ” ; nor is a great warrior, or even a bishop. The right class of subaltern may hold the title before them.

There were many new types evolved in South Africa, and one was the Column Commander.

A short, spare little man with a brick-red face, close-cropped hair, and a three days’ beard. His dust-coloured uniform stained and creased, and worn and torn ; a boot on one foot, and a veldt shoe, to make easy a wound, on the other. The inevitable puttee gaiters, a scratched and ragged Sam Browne belt, with a revolver thrust into the sword frog ; a sjambok in one hand, a pipe in his mouth, and a venerable slouch hat tipped over his right eye—such was our Column Commander.

For 3000 miles had we followed him over the endless veldt, and though deadly weary, deadly home-sick, we were ready to double that record. Somebody said :

“ We have fought together in eighty-four ‘ scraps,’ ” but nobody answered yea or nay. We had given up counting, and only knew we were prepared to fight as many more, rather than leave the job unfinished.

“ And eternal damnation on Steyn and De Wet for keeping us out ! ”

Scattered up and down through the length and breadth of South Africa are little mounds, and sometimes little crosses, which serve as landmarks

of our wanderings, and mark the places where one by one, by twos and threes, by tens and twenties, our comrades have entered into the soldier's immortal rest—but the column marched on for ever.

Looking back upon the birth of our column in the dim past, one is filled with mild surprise that it ever reached maturity. Hastily thrown together, a medley of irregular squadrons, all ignorant of war or even a soldier's elementary duties. Mounted on green horses straight from the sea; one gun, under a garrison gunner; 350 mules and 35 carts under no one in particular, and with drivers who had never seen a mule before; the sole Staff Officer a child from Sandhurst, but—saving clause—a Column Commander in whom, down to the boy trumpeter, who was paid a shilling a day not to trump, we had implicit confidence.

That was our side of the question, but one often wondered what were the feelings of the Column Commander, as he led forth this motley array of amateurs to cross swords with De Wet, Delarey, or Botha!

Whatever he thought, however, he never let it be seen that he had any but the blindest confidence in our prowess, and we in our ignorance were perfectly pleased with ourselves.

War against the Boers was in our imagination a series of Caton Woodville pictures. The three most prominent being—

“The Race for the Kopje,” in which we always got there first and triumphantly received a Boer commando at twenty yards' range with a withering volley.

“Saving the guns” (we only had one, but we all meant to save it). The gunners and team being shot down, we were to dash in on foot, seize the gun, run it down the hill, harness our horses to it with



bits of string, and gallop wildly away, all eyes looking as if they were going to pop out of their respective heads, whilst those of the horses shot out great flashes as well. Lastly, but chiefly,

"A V.C. Episode," according to the sealed pattern, wherein it is first necessary to find a dismounted person—an Officer for choice—to then quietly but firmly insist that he shall jeopardise his life and future prospects by mounting behind the V.C. man, thus to be conveyed as expeditiously as possible within view of a General, or other superior Officer. In accordance with precedent and the custom of the Service, this General or other superior Officer would then fall on the V.C. man's neck, call him a gallant fellow, and producing a Victoria Cross from his hip pocket, firmly pin him thereto.

The kopje episode we frequently experienced, especially in our early days; with this difference only, that the Boers generally got there first, and gave us an exceedingly warm welcome. The gun to the end got along famously without being once saved, which was perhaps a little disappointing for all, except the gunners, who would have had to be killed to complete the episode. And the only occasion on which anyone tried the V.C. tableau, he was merely met with the mild enquiry from our Column Commander, "Well, and what d—d tomfoolery are *you* up to now?" I think our Commander was one of the first to discover that as long as the ground is rideable, and a wide extended formation is used, it is possible with little loss to gallop an enemy out of his position. Times out of number have we done this to the Boers, till they also learnt the lesson and took to galloping our people out of convoys. The only drawback to this evolution was that swords and lances having been



relegated to the museum, we had nothing wherewith to smite the foe when we got there.

Perhaps one of the most silent men in South Africa was our Column Commander, except only when he came across a rebel, and then the glacier melted, and there was a fine flow of the politest and bitterest English. I remember one day, as we were marching past the outskirts of a small town in Cape Colony, a shot was fired from one of the houses which badly wounded one of our men. The Colonel promptly dropped into the town a squadron of some pretty lively Colonial birds we then had with the column, with orders to thoroughly search it for arms and ammunition ; and also to bring ten of the chief inhabitants on foot five miles out to his camp.

An ordinary squadron, searching for arms and ammunition in an ordinary town, does not cause much inconvenience, but the Lord preserve the town that on an extraordinary occasion had to be searched by our Rapsallion squadron. I happened to go back with some orders whilst the search was proceeding, and was equally struck with the thoroughness with which it was carried out, and the vituperative vocabulary of the Dutch ladies. That is to say, of the old Dutch ladies and the very young ones, fat old vraus of fifty and little chickens of fifteen ; whilst the ladies of an intermediate age were philosophically civil, and even obliging. There was only one Englishman in the place, and he was the doctor ; the rest were Dutch, and rank rebels at that. Ammunition was found in four houses, and the owners thereof were at once tried by court-martial and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment and fines of varying amounts.

But the most inspiring part of the incident was when the ten chief residents, headed by the Lord Mayor, arrived exceedingly hot in camp. The Lord Mayor started on the high-horse game, to which

our Column Commander listened quietly for a few minutes, and then the dam broke! A torrent of seething invective poured forth, which I remember ended, "This is a King's Colony, and if a shot is ever again fired from your town on the King's troops, I will burn down one house for every shot fired, and if by chance any of my men are killed, I shall hang you man for man, commencing with you, sir," pointing at the Lord Mayor! Never was seen such a mean crowd as those ten elders as they footed it back to town. Needless to say that not a mouse stirred again in that place. There is only one thing the Dutchman understood in the war, and that was the fist, the almighty fist, and an exceedingly heavy fist. So also is it with the Germans.

"Where are you, and what have you been doing?" was the burden of our letters from home. And echo answered "where" and "what" indeed? Perhaps Lord Kitchener knew, though I doubt it; possibly the Column Commander, after deep thought, could give a faint outline, but to the rank-and-file the past was merely an endless vista of double treks. Réveille at 3.30 a.m., trek from dawn till noon; grazing the horses in the blazing sun or driving rain till 2 p.m.; up saddle and then trek on till dark. Now and again a "scrap" with brother Boer, and now and again a small town passed. But on the whole a weary, dreary nightmare, and not worth writing about.

The Boer War produced many things good and bad. It produced, amongst others, Mounted Infantry, and Dr. Leyds and Mount Nelson warriors and slouch-hat soldiering. But perhaps one of the most useful products of the war was the Column Commander. Here we had fifty or sixty young officers who for months and years together had borne the burden of independent command and

independent responsibility. That training was invaluable, and out of the ranks of these tried and gallant young leaders we had no difficulty for the next ten or fifteen years in finding the right class of Generals which the growing responsibilities of the Empire required.

But amongst them will not be found our Column Commander ; for God gave him rest at last. It happened in this way. We had been marching for about a couple of hours one day in August, when riding over a great roll in the veldt we came into sudden view of the Boer laager, hastily breaking up, about five miles off. It was a strong commando, we knew, and could see for ourselves, but that is just where our little man came in. "When people are in a hurry to go it takes very little persuasion to make them go faster," he said, so, without a moment's hesitation, our three weak squadrons, say two hundred men all told, were hurled against more than ten times that number of war-beaten burghers. With one squadron leading and the other two lying back a bit on each flank, we made a steady sling trot straight for that laager ; the little man leading a good hundred yards in front with his old pipe, and older hat well cocked. First we met a shell or two, then rode into a belt of pompoms ; and then came on to the double ring, and bullet swish, of the Mauser. But we took no heed or notice, and just slogged on quietly on our tired horses. Parties of horsemen sent out hastily to check and stay us fell back, broken and dismayed, and still we jogged on. And now we had arrived at a grassy ridge on the summit of which was a deserted Kafir kraal, about half a mile short of the retreating enemy. It did not want a year's fighting in South Africa to know that that grassy ridge and kraal was stiff with Boers ; and so they were, and that was what we had come for. The centre squadrons

slackened pace a bit, and the two flank squadrons, digging a canter out of their horses, swept out and round, and then wheeling inwards pushed right up the grassy slopes. Stark against the sky they stood to us, and then came a rattle and crash of rifle fire.

It was a Caton Woodville picture this time all right! The right squadron checked, wavered, and melted away. The left squadron pushed on with hardy resolution; perhaps it was not noticed at first, or was hidden by a fold—and then its turn came. It was, as it seemed almost petulantly, swept from the earth, and the ground lay thick with men and horses. In front of us of the centre squadrons was a rock-strewn gentle slope, and our next lucid recollection was charging madly up the gentle rock-strewn slope straight at the Kafir kraal, apparently through a driving hailstorm, though we have since learnt it was bullets. In a few seconds we were over and into them, and there in the midst of a deadly hand-to-hand strife came our Column Commander's call to that land where they say there is Eternal Peace.

As we rushed at the Boers, the Adjutant happened to be a little to his left rear. There were, perhaps, seventy or eighty of the enemy at this spot; some shooting, some struggling on to their horses, and some in full flight. About twenty yards to the Commander's right front was a red-haired, grizzly-bearded burgher, who evidently meant dying. The Adjutant raised his pistol and covered him, but the flash of the barrel caught the Commander's eye, and he turned round and said in his gentle way, "Don't shoot the poor devil!"

And that was the last order our Column Commander gave in this world. He lived on till evening, suffering greatly, but patient ever, and towards sundown a great peace fell on him, and with the sun his quiet smile died gently away.



One soft sigh, and another great heart had gone on its last trek.

Rudyard Kipling was at Simla for brief periods of leave during the middle eighties. He was then sub-editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore. His "Plain Tales from the Hills" used to appear on the front page of that newspaper, over the initials R.K. We thought he was never in Simla long enough at a time to get the intimate knowledge of the social atmosphere which his writings portrayed. And we concluded, rightly or wrongly, that he was greatly helped in this respect by his clever little sister, who spent several seasons running at Simla. It was she, I think, who told us that her brother used to walk down the road to Jutogh, where was stationed a British Battery of Mountain Artillery and a Company of British Infantry, and that on the road he used to stop and converse with the British soldiers, and thus got many of his quaint soldier expressions and turns of language. He used to do the same at Lahore, going down to the fort to meet soldiers.

And now for a curious thing. I myself had served for many years with soldiers, but had never once heard the words or expressions that Rudyard Kipling's soldiers used. Many a time did I ask my brother Officers whether they had ever heard them. No, never. But sure enough, a few years after the soldiers thought, and talked, and expressed themselves exactly like Rudyard Kipling had taught them in his stories! He would get a stray word here, or a stray expression there, and weave them into general soldier talk, in his priceless stories. Rudyard Kipling made the modern soldier.

Other writers have gone on with the good work, and they have between them manufactured the cheery, devil-may-care, lovable person enshrined in our hearts as Thomas Atkins. Before he had



learnt from reading stories about himself that he, as an individual, also possessed the above attributes, he was mostly ignorant of the fact. My early recollections of the British soldier are of a bluff, rather surly person, never the least jocose or light-hearted, except perhaps when he had too much beer. He was brave always, but with a sullen, stubborn bravery. No Tipperary or kicking footballs about it.

To Rudyard Kipling and his fellow-writers the Army owes a great debt of gratitude for having produced the splendid type of soldier who now stands as the English type.

It was during the Boer War that I met Rudyard Kipling again. I was out of camp at the time, and on my return was met by Beresford-Peirse, my Adjutant, who said :

"Two fellows have come to see you. One is a very big fellow, and the other very small. Don't know who they are."

By the Mess cart were standing two gentlemen, both in mufti. One I at once recognised as Rudyard Kipling. His greeting was quite characteristic. He wore divided glasses, the top half for landscapes, and the bottom half for reading and writing.

He was peering through the top halves, and as we approached, and without further prelude, he burst out :

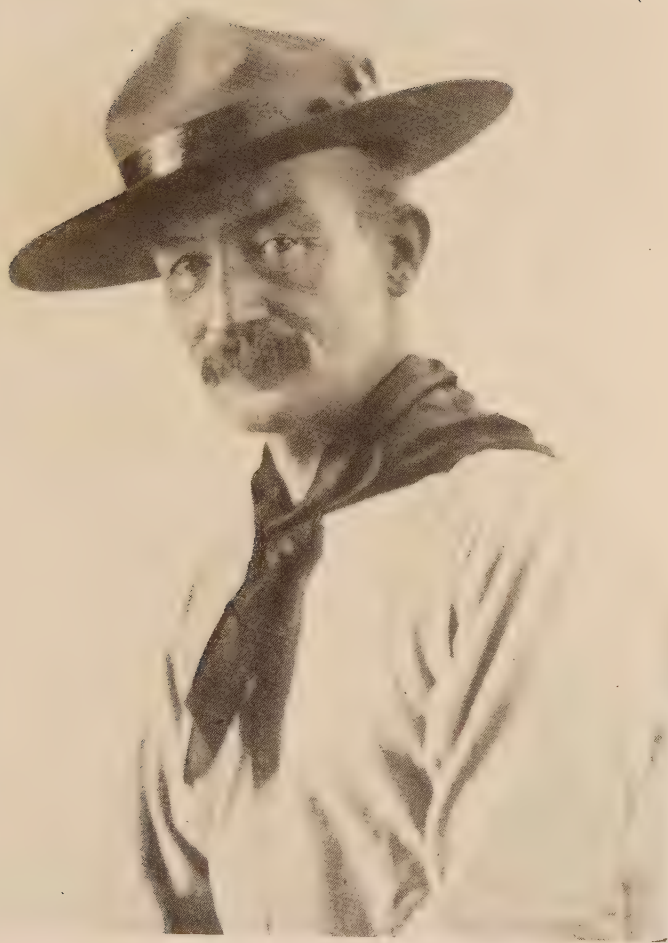
"I say, who were the other two living in Kashmir House, Lahore? One was Younghusband. Who were the other two?"

"Woon and Maude," I replied, and offered them some tea, I am afraid without sugar or milk.

"So it was. Let me introduce my friend, Mr. Cecil Rhodes."

Cecil Rhodes had come on business, and broke in at once :

"You have five hundred English horses here, and



LIEUT.-GEN. SIR ROBERT BADEN POWELL, COMMANDING IN THE  
DEFENCE OF MAFEKING, 1899—00



amongst them a lot of mares. What will you take for the mares ? ”

He was told that we had bought them under regimental arrangements in England, at an average price of £35. That they were Government property, and probably stood the Government in about £60 apiece landed in S. Africa.

“ Well, after the War is over ” (Cecil Rhodes and many others thought it would be over in a few weeks, or at most months), “ if my stud groom, Mr. Collins, may come down and take his pick, I will give £120 apiece for them. I want them for stud purposes.”

We said we thought that this arrangement would suit the Government very well.

But long before the War was over the great Cecil Rhodes was dead, and probably not one of those five hundred horses remained.

As the two great men were leaving the camp, the gallant Yeomen of the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, hearing that two such celebrated persons were in camp, gathered together to see them, and raised a hearty cheer.

Said Cecil Rhodes hastily :

“ Take off your cap, they are cheering you.”

Said Rudyard Kipling :

“ No they are not. They are cheering you. Take off your cap.”

Then Solomon at their elbow suggested :

“ I think they are cheering you both.”

Whereupon both, clinging close together for support, shyly took off their caps.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell, whose name is most honourably connected with S. Africa, in his own book<sup>1</sup> has told the story of how he passed himself off as a foreign newspaper correspondent at Simla.

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Memories.*

I was there at the time, and he was described to me as an Italian Count, and none of us certainly had any notion that he was a British Colonel, so good was his get up and acting of the part of a foreigner. Indeed, at the supper on the stage after the performance, the mother of the leading lady in the play, next which beautiful damsel Sir Robert sat at supper, was filled with fury that a "dam' Dago" should pay such marked attention to her daughter, and tried to incite a British Officer to go and punch his head.

"It's only their foreign way, dear lady," he replied, and soothed her down.

Another episode which does not appear in Sir Robert's book was ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to him. A campaign was in progress against the Afridis in Tirah, a mountainous country unsuitable for Cavalry. Thus the 5th Dragoon Guards, of which Sir Robert was colonel, remained behind at Meerut. But curiously coincident with the absence of the Colonel on ten days' leave appeared a mysterious postal Babu, or native clerk, at one of the advance field post offices in Tirah. The said Babu disappeared, after a few days, as mysteriously as he appeared, and the rumour went round that, thus disguised, Colonel Baden-Powell had seen a bit of the fighting.

After the relief of Mafeking, the gallant defender of that historic spot went down to Cape Colony for a few weeks' rest and was invited to stay with Mr. Cecil Rhodes at "Grootschur." To get to Mr. Cecil Rhodes' house one left the main line at a small junction named Five Rivers just short of Cape Town, and went up a side line. Sir Robert was preparing to change trains when a deputation approached him, and said that the people of Cape Town had prepared a great reception for him, and would be very much disappointed if he did not turn



up. So Sir Robert got into the train again, and went on the few miles to Cape Town. There, to his horror, he found the whole platform from end to end filled with a seething mass of cheering people.

Directly he stepped from the door of his carriage, those nearest seized him forcibly and hoisted him on their shoulders. Others crowded round to help with such enthusiasm that as often as not his legs were in the air and his head down. Certain nefarious persons also commenced cutting the buttons off his coat as souvenirs.

He was thus borne into the street where more huge crowds awaited him. It was tacitly assumed that he was going to stay at Government House, so up the hill the enthusiastic crowd carried him, hatless, dishevelled, and with all his buttons gone. In this condition he was hurled into the front door of the house of a complete stranger, and to which he had not been invited, to the intense astonishment of his host.

During this tremendous *mêlée*, one careful and kind fellow, noticing the generally upside-down position in which the returned warrior was carried, cleverly picked his pockets, and tying up the contents in a pocket-handkerchief threw it through the door after him.

The heroic and prolonged defence of Mafeking was not only an isolated achievement, however gallant and memorable, but we have since learnt that the fall of Mafeking was to be the signal for a general rising of the Dutch in Cape Colony. Had this happened, it would have very materially affected Lord Roberts' great advance on Pretoria.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ON LEAVE IN AMERICA

The Millionaire's Suite on Board—First Shave in America—Traveling at Night—With a Stout Lady—We Dress Together—Staying with the Griscoms—"Tactless" Defined—The British Way—A Reporter at Dinner—"Borrows" a Photograph—"The British Fighter is Here"—Mr. Roosevelt at Oyster Bay—American Individuality—"He Wants to be the Corpse"—Roosevelt's Rough Riders—A Postal Achievement—"Be Strong or Git"—My Brother Frank—His Candour—A Relic of Wolfe—The Heights of Abraham—British Gunners Speak French—The Races at Toronto—Canadian Hospitality—The Montreal Choir—A Country House in America—A Bright Throng—Making a Night of It—An Experience at Bridge—The Flapper—"You Carry Me"—Wins £780—Dividing the Spoil—The Diamond Bracelet—Poppa Displeased—Bong-bongs or Bouketts—The Right Way

**W**HILST recovering from a long-standing wound, after the Boer War, and bored with having been shut up for some months, the brilliant suggestion was made that I should go to the United States and Canada, partly professionally and partly for the sake of my health. We were staying with some friends in Yorkshire at the time, and amongst our fellow-guests was Lloyd Griscom, a young American attaché at their Embassy in London.

"What line do you intend travelling by?" We had calculated to go by the Cunard Line, and told him so.

"Say! You go by the American Line, and I'll see you're well looked after. My father's boss of that line."

So on his advice we took the lowest priced first-

class tickets, and he enclosed a note, asking the management to do their best for us.

On arrival at Southampton we were met by an exceedingly polite gentleman with his hat in his hand, who said he had received our American friend's note, and hoped he would succeed in making us comfortable. Whereupon we were shown up with great pomp and ceremony into the millionaire's suite, which happened to be empty that voyage, and travelled therein in great luxury across the Atlantic.

The first intimate touch we had of that great and surprising country across the water was during the first morning shave in New York. I generally shave myself, but thought I would try the native talent. Not, however, being accustomed to be shaved by another, I was contorting my face about as one does, to stretch the skin probably, when shaving oneself. The gentleman who was honouring me with his attentions stopped, razor in hand, and gazing sternly at me, gave out this ultimatum :

" If you make faces at me, I'll cut yer ! "

Travelling by night train we were advised to book lower berths in advance : this we did. The lower and upper berths by day make two seats facing each other, and facing me was an exceedingly stout female. I was wondering languidly how she was going to get into the top berth, no mean feat for even a young and active man, when the nigger conductor came round to make up the beds. So I went off to have a smoke, and on my return found the problem very easily solved, for the stout lady had gone to sleep in my bed. And it was I who, with a game leg, had to climb up through her and undress in bed, putting my boots under my pillow, there apparently being nowhere else to put them. Next morning the stout lady and I dressed as best we could, partly in our beds and partly out, and as

far as publicity went we might have been in the street. And what is more, she never thanked me for my bed!

I was telling this not very interesting story to some American friends.

"That was vurry tactless of the woman," remarked Momma.

"What's tactless?" asked Virginia.

"Tactless, Virginia?" drawled Poppa. "Wal, I guess it would be tactless of you, when you go to Heaven and meet St. Peter, to start right in talking about cocks."

One evening we arrived just before dinner to stay with Lloyd Griscom's people in their country house near Philadelphia. It was pouring with rain, and we skipped out hastily into the hall, where a butler and footman received us, and also our host, Mr. Clem Griscom, and Lloyd Griscom. They welcomed us most kindly and hospitably.

"You're just in time. Run right away up and change your clothes, and it'll be dinner-time. Have a cocktail? No? Well, run away up."

So up we went and waited for our hand baggage, grip-bags they call them, to be brought up. For it is the custom of the country to express your larger baggage through from place to place. This, though it sounds very nice and convenient, is very expensive, half a dollar a piece, and means that you do not, as a rule, get your trunks till several hours, perhaps days, after your own arrival. After waiting some time we rang the bell. No response. Rang it again. No response. So I went on a cruise of discovery, and at last found Lloyd. To him I confided our predicament. He at once burst into a roar of laughter.

"Wal! now if that ain't a Britisher all over! Why, if you'd been an American you'd a held on to those grip-bags even if you hadn't a spare

hand for your host. Why like as not they've gone off in the carriage, a quarter-mile down to the stables."

Which proved to be the case. Of course, the way it struck us was that it was not much good keeping a butler and a footman if they didn't do their own work!

Cocktails all round in the drawing-room, and then to dinner. We had scarcely sat down when the butler came to me and said: "There's a gentleman wants to see you—a reporter, I think, sir."

"Tell him I'm very sorry, I am at dinner."

"Oh! give him a chance," laughed our host, good-humouredly. "It is probably some poor devil to whom the five dollars he'll get for copy will mean a lot."

So out I went and found a very apologetic and polite gentleman, who was greatly distressed at disturbing us, and to whom I talked for about five minutes, mostly about himself and his family.

Next morning the papers had huge headlines,

### THE BRITISH FIGHTER IS HERE,

accompanied by my photograph, which, by the way, the reporter had unofficially borrowed, whilst waiting, off my hostess's mantelpiece. There were about two columns, describing with a wealth of detail an interview, mostly imaginary, with the British Fighter.

Before dinner was over another newspaper called us up from New York on the telephone, but I suborned the butler to work him off. What puzzled us most was how the reporters got to know where we were, and whom we were staying with, all over the States.

. . . . .



Amongst other friends we stayed with was Mr. Roosevelt at Oyster Bay, a most genial and interesting host, with strong views on many subjects. One of these was that you spoilt a boy's individuality if you interfered with him too much, and he and Mrs. Roosevelt had quite an amiable argument at breakfast as to whether Kermit was to be allowed to wade in the sea with his clothes on or not. Mrs. Roosevelt said "No," because he not only spoilt his clothes, but caught cold. Mr. Roosevelt, on the other hand, said "Yes," because it was interfering with his individuality if you did not so allow him.

Kermit had a sly hit back at his father, in quite a dispassionate and guileless manner.

"You know father likes to be top dog, the most prominent person wherever he is. If he's at a wedding he wants to be the bride, and if he's at a funeral he wants to be the corpse."

We were looking at an enlarged photograph of a group of horsemen, under which was inscribed "Roosevelt's Rough Riders." In rather idle curiosity it occurred to me to ask where they got their horses from.

"Horses!" exclaimed Mr. Roosevelt, "we hadn't any. We went through the campaign on foot, and only got those to be photographed on when we got back."

He also told us most amusing stories of how he commandeered a passenger train in New York to take his regiment to Key West, and how at Key West he captured the transport assigned to some other regiment, and set sail for Cuba.

In his scrap-book Mr. Roosevelt showed us an example of remarkable intelligence on the part of the postal department. Some facetious person had drawn a pair of pince-nez and a set of teeth on an envelope, put a stamp on it, and dropped it into

a pillar-box in New York. By the very first delivery it was handed to Mr. Roosevelt. Those who have seen Mr. Roosevelt making a speech, or even a photograph of him doing so, will at once appreciate the pleasantry.

That reminds me of another Roosevelt story. When Mr. Roosevelt was in Egypt, he made a speech the drift of which was: "If you British mean to stay in Egypt, be strong; and if you don't, git!" Shortly after a brother officer, who had just retired from His Majesty's Service, and was thinking of going into Parliament, was making a political speech somewhere. In the course of his remarks he said that he thoroughly agreed with Mr. Roosevelt, and added that the same line of argument applied to India. He then went on to point out that this principle was not being acted upon by the Government of the day. Next morning he received a peremptory order to at once go and see a certain Cabinet Minister, the fact having been overlooked that he was now a gentleman at large. He was in due course ushered into the great man's study, and there received with considerable coldness.

"Do you know, sir, this is not only an attack on the Government, but a personal attack on *me!*" exclaimed the Cabinet Minister with some warmth.

"Well, sir, I am sorry you take it so, but"—in a burst of candour—"to tell you the truth, I meant it to be!"

When we were in Quebec rather a curious thing happened. Seeing my name in the Château Frontenac Hotel register, an old retired officer of the 18th Royal Irish, as far as I remember, came to call on us, delighted to meet again a brother Officer. A few days later he asked us up to lunch, his house being on the Heights of Abraham, on the site of the

battle in which Wolfe died. Whilst we were at lunch some men, who were digging a hole for a telegraph post not far from the house, about three feet down, came across a grape shot, evidently a relic of the battle. This our host insisted on giving me, as my old regiment, the 17th Foot, served under Wolfe in that very war.

We were also granted a pass to see over the Citadel. At the gate, in the uniform of the British Royal Artillery, were a couple of non-commissioned officers and half a dozen men, two being on sentry. I handed my pass to the Sergeant, who took it with finished politeness, and after looking at it, to our great astonishment, said in excellent French : " Par-faitement, monsieur, par ici." And not one word of English could that Sergeant in the English Royal Artillery uniform speak !

Canadian hospitality to the travelling soldier is unbounded, and we had not been an hour in Toronto when the call-boy came to say that a gentleman wanted to speak to me on the telephone. " I am Major Dawson of the Royal Canadian Dragoons," the voice said, " and saw your name on the hotel register. To-morrow is the first day of the races. May our coach call for you on the way down ? Also I propose securing free passes for you and your wife to the grand stand and paddock." All very nice and friendly ; and a most enjoyable afternoon we had. The racing lasted for nine days on end : six days one week, Sunday rest ; and three days next week !

On the day we were leaving Montreal for Quebec we found we had a lot to do at the last moment, so I calculated out roughly what the tickets would cost, and told the hotel porter to get them, register our baggage, take our seats, and await our arrival on the platform. We just caught the train, and the porter handed over our tickets and a considerably

larger amount of change than we had anticipated. However, we thought we must have made a mistake, gave the porter his tip, and jumped into the train. When we got into the Pullman we thought our fellow-passengers were looking at us with some curiosity, but put that down to gossip on the part of the hotel porter, who as likely as not had given a biographical sketch of us. After a time, however, the ticket collector came round, and we noticed great consultations going on, and covert looks of a deeply suspicious type being cast in our direction. We were beginning to feel like fugitives from justice, when the conductor at last came across and said, "Say, mister, let's see your ticket," in about the tone a righteous conductor would use towards a fugitive from justice. I produced the tickets, and the conductor, after scrutinizing them, remarked: "That's all right," and went back to console and reassure the other passengers. Suspicious looks were now turned to those of mere curiosity, and we had almost forgotten the incident when, in passing half an hour later, the conductor remarked:

"You've got a nice night for your show"; and passed on.

A nice night for our show! A nice night, no doubt, but we had so far made no plans for seeing any show.

When he passed back, I asked, "What show?"

"Your show, of course," he replied, staring hard.

"Haven't got a show. What do you mean?"

"Why, don't you belong to that lot up there?"

"No, never seen them in my life. Who are they?"

"Well, I am jiggered!" said the conductor. "That's the celebrated Choir from Montreal going down to sing at Quebec Cathedral. And they was two tickets out when I went to collect, and you've got 'em. So they thought you was two new hands

come in at the last moment. How did you get the tickets ? ”

I told him.

“ Suppose he charged you full price for 'em ? ”

“ No, he didn't.”

“ Lorgoramighty, one honest Injun ! ”

So we travelled in great state and comfort, accompanied by a very sensible economy, as a portion of the celebrated Montreal Choir, on its way to perform in the Cathedral at Quebec.

. . . . .

Staying in a country house in America is great fun, and everyone is perfectly delightful to one, and everything is charmingly unconventional. No one seems to know exactly who, or how many, will come to lunch, or dinner, or even breakfast.

“ Well, what brought you, Pansie ? ”

“ Oh ! I happened along.”

“ And you, Elsie ? ”

“ Oh ! I happened along too.”

One night at the Griscoms' six or eight, mostly girls, turned up suddenly, just before dinner.

“ The Silas P. Tokers are giving a hop over here, so we've come to dine and liven ourselves up a bit before,” they announced.

After dinner off they all went, taking some of our party too, but in less than an hour we heard great laughing and talking, and in they all burst again.

“ It was so deadly dull over there we've come back ; just to liven you all up again, 'fore going home,” they explained.

Our host and hostess invited them to stay as long as they liked, but they were going to bed ; the daughter of the house also retired, and so did all the servants. But this did not in the least disturb the festivities. Led by Lloyd, first we danced, and then



we played games, and then drew pigs with our toes, and wrote limericks about each other.

"My, I do feel hungry!" exclaimed Pansie at about 1 a.m.

"Here too, and thirsty as well," chorused Dixie and Mamie.

"Let's go sample the larder," suggested someone.

So we each took a bedroom candle and, headed by Elsie, made a descent into the regions below, and after careful search returned with quite a lot of provender. To wit, half a ham, some bread, two tins of sardines, a piece of cheese, some biscuits, several bottles of beer, and a jug of water. With these simple aids we made an excellent supper, and blessed our sleeping hostess.

This put new spirits into the party, and it was 3 a.m. before Pansie remarked, "Well, girls, it's about time we vamoosed." And off they went, as mightily pleased as we were with the livening up they had given us.

An acquaintance of mine, not a very rich man, was staying in New York, and one night was asked out to dinner. After dinner, tables were laid for bridge, and he was asked if he would cut in.

"Oh! yes, certainly."

But he little knew what was before him!

The first shock he got was when he heard the points mentioned. They were very much higher than he had ever played, or could afford to play. However, he was in for it now. His second shock came when he drew as his partner a girl of sixteen, just past the flapper stage. And his third and final shock came when the girl of sixteen leaned across to him, and said:

"Say! Poppa don't allow me to play bridge. Will you carry me?"

Of course he had to smile and say he would; but he was feeling particularly unwell. However, before

he had been playing five minutes he discovered that the girl of sixteen was an absolute professor at bridge; he had never seen such play, and confidently and thankfully left everything he possibly could to her. They played together practically the whole evening, and when accounts were made up at the end, the plump and comfortable sum of £780 sterling was pushed across to the Englishman. He carefully divided the money into two portions and pushed one across to the girl of sixteen.

"No! No!" she exclaimed, "that's all yours. You carried me. My Poppa don't allow me to play bridge, an' what'd he say if I came home with all that money. Snakes! he'd beat me good. No, no, you keep it all."

And nothing would change her determination. So the Englishman took the money home, and next morning went down to Tiffany's, and buying a nice diamond bracelet for about £400, had it sent up with his compliments to his partner of the night before. And congratulated himself on having neatly and gallantly met the situation. He received no acknowledgment of his little souvenir, but a couple of mornings after, as he was dressing, the hotel valet came in and said a gentleman wanted to see him, and without further prelude in walked the gentleman.

It was the goatee-bearded American father to the life!

"Say, Mr. What'syername, I wanter know what you mean by sendin' valerable presents to my dorter," and he produced the fatal bracelet.

"Indeed, I am very sorry"—and then the Englishman, in spite of the old man's veto on bridge, thought he had better tell him the whole story.

Poppa listened carefully.

"That's so? I'll let that gurl have it good when I get home. Why, she's as much chance of winnin'

bye and large, with that lot, as a celluloid dog'd have of catching an asbestos cat, chasing through hell."

"Well, if I may say so, your charming little daughter was, I think, the asbestos one last night," smiled the Englishman.

Poppa was evidently somewhat mollified at the praise of his little girl, but he was adamant about the bracelet.

"No, I won't have valerable presents made my dorter. If it was a box of bong-bongs now, or a boukett, that's another story. I wish you good morning, sir."

And he made his departure, leaving the unhappy bracelet on the table.

The Englishman was rather puzzled what to do, and was smiling over the celluloid dog, and the bong-bongs, and the boukett, when a happy inspiration came to him. He finished dressing, had his breakfast, and then made for the nearest bong-bong shop. There he bought the largest box of sweets—candies, the girl would have called them—obtainable, tucked the bracelet away at the bottom of them, and in due course sent the box up to his late partner.

Evidently that was the right way to do things, for the girl, when they next met, thanked him sweetly for the candies, but said not one word about the bracelet.

We stayed at another country house, this time in New England, with Mrs. Roosevelt-Cole, a sister of the President, a most charming hostess. Lloyd Griscom was there, and also a very pretty Miss Roosevelt, who was a very rich girl, having inherited a good deal of the Astor money. I was chaffing her one day, and said she must go over to England and marry a Duke. She pretended to be very angry indeed, and said she didn't hold at all with American girls marrying Englishmen, or indeed any but Americans.

Several years afterwards, at a crush in London, I saw Helen Roosevelt sitting on a sofa some way off. Working through the crowd I went up to her, and one of the first things she said was :

"Do you remember what I said about not marrying an Englishman? Allow me to introduce my fiancé," and she presented a young American.

That was a bad loss for England, for she was a remarkably nice girl.

Not far from the Roosevelt-Coles' house was a large girls' boarding school, where all the best families in the States, if they could afford it, sent their girls. And an exceedingly good time they must have had. It is not at many schools in England that the girls are allowed to keep dog-carts of their own (now probably replaced by motor-cars) as they did there.

Noticing some large nursery gardens with long rows of greenhouses, we asked how they could possibly make it pay in a little village like this.

"Pay!" was the reply. "Why, it is supported almost entirely by the girls' school, they buy the lot."

That must have been another handsome little item in Poppa's bill.

Apparently the custom at the school was for the small girls to "bunch" the big ones, and the more they loved them the more they bunched them.

The daily habit of presenting flowers to one's lady friends, very prevalent in America, is a very pretty one, though very expensive and perhaps a little overdone. On board the ship, when leaving New York, sheaves and baskets of flowers came for some of the girls. But there were so many that they did not in the least appreciate them. We saw lying about on the saloon tables the most beautiful and costly flowers, with the lady's and the sender's names on them, which were never even picked up,

but left for the stewards to decorate the tables with.

The first thing a reporter asks the traveller on landing are his impressions of America ; occasionally one asks the same question of the departing tourist. Our chief impression was of the exceeding kindness and hospitality of our American friends. They take endless trouble to make one happy and comfortable, and give one a good time. And, above all, they hope and wish you to go away with a good impression of America—and you do.



## CHAPTER XIV

### KING EDWARD AND OTHER RULERS

King Edward—A Great King—The *Rapprochement* with France and Russia—His Tact and Diplomacy—Political Foresight—Sandringham—Lord Marcus Beresford and the Mare—The Marquis de Soveral—*The Importance of Being Earnest*—A Game of Bridge—"Off with his Head"—The Prince's Joke—"Persimmon"—The Prince and the Medal—Handing Potatoes to the German Emperor—Lord William Beresford—Some Anecdotes—Lord and Lady Dufferin—George V as Prince of Wales in India—The Royal Gift—The Prince's Charger—King George's Charger—Sir John Woon Twice to the Rescue—The German Emperor—Salisbury Cathedral—The Policeman's Story—The Former King of Siam—His 800 Wives—The Fate of an Amorous Page—Only 200 Wives on Week-end Visits—Milliners and Confectioners for 800 Wives—The Mikado—A Modern Monarch—In French Uniform—The Duke and Duchess of Connaught—A Divisional General in India—At a Small Dance—The Duke at Rawal Pindi—A Stanhope Gold Medal—Another—Mr. Roosevelt—The Boer Delegates—A Great President

**K**ING EDWARD VII, though his reign was short, will go down in history as one of the great Kings of England. For he had not only the personal charm which made him popular with all his subjects, but he was a great ruler. Keeping well within the bounds of the British Constitution, he became a power in Europe and the world. Before King Edward came to the throne the leading royal personality in Europe was William II, the German Emperor. But in a very short time William II receded into the background, and the leading monarch in Europe, as well as the world, was King Edward.

Two of his great personal achievements were the *rapprochement* he initiated and secured between



KING EDWARD VII



Great Britain and France on the one hand, and Great Britain and Russia on the other. For centuries we had been off and on at enmity with France, and many a campaign have we fought against the gallant French. During the Boer War, and for some time after, it was not pleasant, and sometimes scarcely safe, for an Englishman to travel in France. Porters at the station would not carry one's hand baggage, and hotel-keepers refused to take one in. Some even went so far as to change the names of their hotels from Angleterre to Russie, so unpopular was England. From this attitude of intense dislike, even of hatred, King Edward by his personal charm and diplomacy turned the French nation into our firmest friends and admirers.

With Russia for generations we had been on the point of war over differences of opinion on Asiatic policy. The Russians did not perhaps dislike us as much as did the French, but there was open enmity between us, and both nations sat on a powder cask which any spark might explode. By King Edward's efforts that attitude on both sides was completely changed, and Russia and England became firm friends.

What that political foresight did for humanity this Great War has demonstrated. But for King Edward, Europe might now be under the iron heel of Prussia.

There were merry days at Sandringham when King Edward was Prince of Wales, and many bright souls were brought together there for week-end parties. Amongst these was Lord Marcus Beresford, a man of very ready wit.

One day a mare belonging to Sir E. Cassel came down to be served by "Persimmon," a grand horse which the Prince had bred himself and which won the Derby. She came in a private horse-box, and outside was painted the owner's name, E. Cassel. Lord Marcus was looking on at the unboxing of the

mare, and happened to glance at the name on the box.

To the stud groom standing by, Lord Marcus remarked :

" You ought to have Sir E. Cassel on the box, now your master has become a K.C.M.G."

" Ought I to, my lord ? And ought I to put the K.C.M.G. too ? "

" Yes," replied Lord Marcus promptly. " You put the K.C.M. outside and the Gee inside."

There was another merry quip at the time in which Sir Ernest Cassel figured. Someone asked the Marquis de Soveral if he had seen *The Importance of being Earnest*, a play which was then having a good run.

" No, I have not," replied the Marquis, " but I have seen the great importance of being Ernest Cassel."

The Princess of Wales, Princess Maud, Lord Marcus Beresford, and a young member of the Household were playing bridge together. In the course of the game the Princess of Wales apparently played a card that was not approved of by the young member.

" You ought to have played the ace of spades, ma'am," he remarked rather abruptly. Bridge was in its infancy then. Lord Marcus looked sadly at the ceiling and soliloquised :

" Why were we not born three hundred years ago ? "

" Why so ? " asked everyone, puzzled.

" Because then, ma'am, you would have said, ' Off with his head.' "

The Prince of Wales was fond of his little joke, and on one occasion two or three of us, out-distancing the others, arrived with H.R.H. at the stable yard, on one side of which was " Persimmon's " box. In the middle of the yard, standing loose, was



a very fine, well-groomed cart mare. The chance was too good to be lost, and as the rest came through the doorway the Prince, with great affability, not unmixed with a tone of pride, introduced them to "Persimmon," standing in the middle of the yard. They can hardly have been very knowledgable about horses, or else perchance they were courtiers of the richest dye, for the remarks to be heard were :  
 "What a beauty !"

"No *wonder* he won the Derby !"

And a male voice : "By Jove, a regular fizzer !"

A slight pause, and then a quiet lady's drawl :  
 "She's rather fat, isn't she ?" And that broke the spell.

Then we really were introduced to "Persimmon."

It was customary before leaving Sandringham for guests to write their names in the Prince of Wales's book. The Princess of Wales and Princess Victoria also asked some of the guests to write in their books. It was after dinner in the billiard-room, whilst writing my name in the Prince's book, that an extraordinary instance of his minute knowledge of the smallest affairs occurred. The Prince was sitting to my left, and suddenly remarked : "Why have you not got on such-and-such a medal ?" mentioning one that had been granted by a foreign Power. The said medal was reposing peacefully in some forgotten box ; nor had it occurred to me that it was meant to be worn. On the spur of the moment I made some blundering reply to this effect.

"Well, I always look on the wearing of a medal like that as a matter of international courtesy," said His Royal Highness. "I believe, however, that there is some damned red tape to be gone through at the War Office."

The present King of Norway was also one of that party. A very good-looking, fine sailor.

One evening, in thoughtful accents, and gazing sadly at a soldier, Lord Marcus Beresford remarked :

"I can't think why you soldiers go worrying about the world, getting into all sorts of untidy wars, just to collect a few medals. Why, I know a fellow who has got nine medals and he has never been out of the dining-room."

"Nine medals! And never been out of the dining-room? What did he get them for?"

"Get them for?" with much deliberation. "Why, handing potatoes to the German Emperor."

Writing of Lord Marcus Beresford reminds me of his brother, Lord William, Lord "Bill," as he was called by his intimates.

He was not only a courteous and able Military Secretary to three successive Viceroys, but he knew how to keep people in order. At a dance one night at the Viceregal Lodge a Medical Officer took his partner to the buffet to give her nourishment. The *khitmutgar* behind the buffet did not at once comply with the order given; whereupon the Medical Officer got angry, and called him several bad names in Hindustani. Lord William happened to be standing near, and overheard the remarks. He went up to the Officer, touched him on the shoulder, and led him apart from his lady.

"Look here, So-and-so, this is the Viceroy's house and not a pub, and that is one of his private servants. This is evidently no place for you, and if you are not out of it in five minutes I'll damn well kick you out."

And out he went; and off the Viceregal Lodge list he came.

One of the A.D.C.'s was dining out with friends one night, and in the course of conversation his hostess remarked that she had found great trouble in getting flowers for the table.

"Oh! I'll get you lots," said the A.D.C. Accord-



LORD WILLIAM BERESFORD IN 1886

*Reproduced from "Lord William Beresford" by kind permission of Mrs. Stuart Menzies*



ingly next morning he went down into the Viceregal Lodge garden and sent for the gardener. To him he gave the commandment that he was to make up a nice large basket of roses, and send them up with his compliments to Mrs. This-or-That. Lord William, who had eyes and ears everywhere, heard of this, and after lunch took the A.D.C. by the arm and marched him quietly but firmly into his room.

"Look here, young feller-me-lad, I hear you sent up some flowers to a lady to-day."

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Did you by any chance send them with His Excellency's compliments?"

"No, sir, I sent them with my own."

"Thought so. May I ask is this His Excellency's garden or yours?"

"His Excellency's, of course. I thought there was no harm, there are lots of roses."

"Well, sonny, next time you send flowers to your lady friends from other people's gardens, perhaps you'll ask their consent first. Just a matter of civility, you know."

At a ball at Benmore one rather hot night, the contriver of the festival had arranged a lot of seats in pairs in the adjoining racquet court, which was pitch dark. So that those fond couples, who could not say all they had to say to each other in the ball-room, might do so more freely in this grateful shade. During one of the dance intervals, Lord William took his partner there to talk politics or what not, and whilst there she dropped a small brooch. Groping about in the dark they could not find it.

"Light a match, will you, Lord William, and then we can see," said the lady.

"Why not a bull's-eye lantern whilst we are about it? No, no, let's play fair." Then he stood up, and in a loud and clear voice announced:



"Ladies and Gentlemen, I am about to light a match."

And after a tactful pause he did so.

Lord William was no respecter of persons, and one night at a ball at the Viceregal Lodge, by some mistake such as rarely occurred, nobody had been told off to take Lady Roberts in to supper, so that when all had gone in she was left sitting alone on a sofa in the drawing-room. Lord William immediately discovered Her Ladyship's absence from the supper-room, and at once dashed out in hot pursuit. Standing against the door-post, and curiously gazing through his eyeglass at the forlorn lady on the sofa, was a very nice and popular A.D.C., the present Duke of Bedford, then on the Viceroy's staff.

Perhaps no past, present, or future Duke has heard so much information regarding his duties compressed into a few seconds as did His Grace.

Lord Bill was always a great favourite, particularly with the Viceroys and Vicereines of India under whom he served.

Probably no Viceroy and his wife have been more popular in India than Lord and Lady Dufferin. Both were perfectly charming to everyone, and each one was made to feel that he or she was a welcome guest.

One night at a ball, during one of the dances, Lord Dufferin, who was prowling about, if one may use such a phrase of a Viceroy, espied a young and beauteous damsel sitting all by herself in the drawing-room, with no attendant swains, and no one to dance with.

Screwing his eyeglass firmly in, Lord Dufferin crossed the room and accosted the damsel :

"Well, my dear, why are you not dancing? You are looking rather sad, and I want everyone to be enjoying themselves."



THE MARQUESS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA



The damsel was a sister of Rudyard Kipling, and of ready wit.

"Well, sir, you see I am quite young. I am only eighteen. Perhaps when I am forty I shall get some partners."

Lord Dufferin beamed on her in his quiet way, and said :

"No, my dear, you shall not wait till you are forty. You shall dance with me now and at once, if you will so far honour me."

That incident Rudyard Kipling brings into one of his poems. For it was a matter of some remark in those days that married women, up to any age, danced, whilst their daughters sat out.

Lady Dufferin, besides being most charming, was full of common sense and *savoir faire*. At Simla was a lady who had been divorced several times—well, once or twice at least—and consequently was not eligible to be on the Viceregal Lodge list. The United Service Club was giving a ball to which the Viceroy and Lady Dufferin were invited, and according to the code no lady or gentleman not on the Viceregal Lodge list could be asked to meet them. Now the lady aforesaid, who perhaps merely suffered from too large a heart, had many friends who were members of the Club, and who absolutely and entirely refused to support or attend the ball unless she was invited. This was rather a dilemma, and so determined was the feeling that it bid fair to wreck the ball, which was really a complimentary one to their Excellencies, in return for their many hospitalities.

In this quandary a meeting of the Ball Committee was convened, and it was decided that an emissary should be sent to the Viceregal Lodge to negotiate. Diplomacy is not my line, but in default of a better I was sent on this mission. With extraordinary craft and subtlety, instead of attacking the main

fort out of hand, I laid siege to an outlying picquet, and as a result was asked to breakfast with Lady Dufferin's sister-in-law, Mrs. Rowan Hamilton. After breakfast I disclosed our sad dilemma, and asked the kind assistance of my hostess.

"I'll do what I can. Come back to lunch," she said.

So I came back to lunch and was told privily, and for my own information, that Lady Dufferin could not possibly see or know all the five hundred guests at a ball, and that as long as the lady in question did not thrust herself into prominence by entering the State Quadrille or something of that sort, there was no earthly reason why Her Excellency should know whether she was there or not.

That was a diplomatic decision which was worthy of her noble husband, the most distinguished and successful Ambassador of his day.

When George V as Prince of Wales was making a tour of India with the Princess, he gave an illustration that he possesses the great gift of kings, the faculty of remembering people's faces.

Amongst other places, the Royal party visited Peshawar. As in duty bound, all the head officials, Civil and Military, paraded on the station platform to receive their Royal Highnesses. I had nothing to do with Peshawar, and was away on manœuvres with my regiment, when I received a wire from Sir Harold Deane, a friend of mine and then Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier, asking me to come with my wife to meet their Royal Highnesses at dinner at his house.

Arriving at Peshawar just before the Royal train, I was told that I had better stay on the platform with the officials, who were there to receive the Prince and Princess. There were probably twenty of them formed up in a semicircle opposite the strip of red carpet, and I was pushed in anywhere.



The train came in, and preceded by one or two of their staff, the Prince and Princess stepped out of the carriage. They commenced going round the circle from the right, shaking hands with the various officials. Then I saw the Prince of Wales glance across to the other wing, and as his eye ran along it, I heard him say :

“ There is Younghusband over there.” For one catches one’s own name very easily.

The Princess said, “ Where ? ”

“ Third from the end,” replied H.R.H. And when they came round to me, they were most kind. Enquired after my wound ; remembered exactly where and how it had been received, and, in fact, knew more about me than probably half the officials on the platform.

That was really a very marked triumph for even a Royal memory, for neither their Royal Highnesses, nor anyone in the Royal train, could possibly have known that I would be amongst those on the Peshawar platform. Nor am I seven feet high, nor seven feet round the waist.

Apropos of this visit to Peshawar, which city is known historically as the most turbulent in Upper India, in the densely thronged bazaars may be seen cut-throats from all Asia : from the trans-border tribes, from Kabul, and from all parts of Central Asia. Desperate-looking ruffians, many of them. The Inspector-General of Police was taking no risks, so before their Royal Highnesses arrived he, with his police, made a round up of all the known desperate criminals, and popped them temporarily, out of harm’s way, into the local gaol. Explaining to them with much geniality, that they would have free food and lodging there, and would also be granted a sumptuary allowance of a shilling a day for the few days they were thus resting from their labours. The said criminals made no objec-

tions ; indeed, the more needy hoped that H.R.H. would make a prolonged stay in Peshawar. There were about two hundred in this round up. H.R.H. somehow got wind of this, and one day asked the Inspector-General of Police how many bad characters he had shut up.

The Inspector-General of Police pondered deeply for some seconds. Then looking straight at H.R.H., replied with great deliberation :

"One, I think, sir."

The other day, going round the King's stables, we came across an old friend, "Delhi," the King's charger. When George V came to India as Prince of Wales, preparations were made a full year beforehand to provide him with a suitable charger. The head of the Remount Department in India was entrusted with the matter, and no money was to be spared. Two really good horses were at length obtained and for a year broken in and put through a suitable course of training, for it is a nuisance when one wants to be doing something, to have a horse "arsin' about," as the trooper terms it. Just before the Prince arrived, however, a shocking catastrophe occurred : one horse died, and the other went lame.

The Indian Government was stirred to its depths, and naturally considerably annoyed at this scurvy trick on the part of Fate. Telegrams flew from end to end of India, searching for a suitable horse ; every Rajah's stable was sampled. At the last, out of the length and breadth of India, and out of tens of thousands of horses, two were selected. One belonged to the Viceroy's Bodyguard, and one belonged to General Sir John Woon. His Royal Highness liked Sir John Woon's horse very much, rode him all the time he was in India, and took him home.

Five or six years later, when George V was King and made another visit to India, exactly the same

catastrophe, as regards horses, occurred. The selected and trained chargers again failed the Indian Government, death or disease claiming them before His Majesty arrived. India was again scoured, and at last in desperation a telegram was sent to Sir John Woon.

"Have you by any chance another horse that would suit the King as a charger?"

Sir John Woon wired back that he had a charger which suited him very well, and would gladly send it up for trial. Sir John Woon was then stationed a thousand miles from Delhi. In due course the horse arrived, and proved to be the exact charger the King wanted. So he too was ridden by His Majesty all the time he was in India, and he too was brought home and named "Delhi," and now stands in the King's stable, and is constantly ridden by him.

Both these horses were Australians.

I have never met the German Emperor to speak to, but once came across his tracks in rather a curious way, which gave a small instance of a very curious and complex character. We were attending some Cavalry manœuvres on Salisbury Plain, partly for instruction, and partly to give our small boy a taste for Cavalry.

On an off day, having nothing particular to do, we decided to go and visit Salisbury Cathedral. Driving up close to it we saw a very old arch on which was a notice board forbidding motor-cars to drive through the arch. We therefore drew up outside, and walked in to inspect the Cathedral.

Having completed our visit we came out, and to our horror noticed that during our absence the chauffeur had driven the car through the arch and drawn it up close to the railings. We also noticed he was talking to a policeman; visions floated before us of heavy fines, and we inwardly cursed

that froward chauffeur. As we approached, however, we noticed that the two were in amicable converse, and grinning broadly. I at once apologised to the policeman for the stupidity of our chauffeur.

"Oh! that notice don't apply to you, sir; it's only to prevent its being made a thoroughfare: an occasional motor like yours don't matter. I was just telling your man, the last motor that came through that arch was the German Emperor's. Hearing who he was from his chauffeur, of course I let him through, and the car was drawn up just where yours is. Well, the Emperor went in and visited the Cathedral, and whilst he was in, it got about that the German Emperor was here. So a small crowd, mostly boys, collected round the car to see him when he came out. After the Emperor had got into the car, someone in the crowd said:

" 'Three cheers for the German Emperor.'

"So a few boys cheered; boys is ready to cheer anything.

"The Emperor stood up in the car and took off his hat and bowed, and then he made a speech something like this:

" 'Citizens of the town of Salisbury, I have just visited your beautiful and ancient cathedral, and my only sorrow is that I am not an Englishman that I might claim to be a part owner of it.'

"And, sir," he continued, "the Emperor got so moved with his own words that the tears poured down his face. So the boys cheered again, and off he drove. Thank you, sir, thank you kindly."

The old King of Siam was one of the old-fashioned sort. He had eight hundred wives, but I am not sure whether he followed King Solomon in having also eight hundred of the other sort—porcupines, I believe schoolboys call them. Nor was any light-heartedness permitted unto the eight hundred. When I was in Bangkok a page of the palace laid



siege to one of the outlying wives, and promptly had his head cut off, to discourage him from further efforts. The lady, too, it was reported, ended her days in a sack at the bottom of the Mekong River. Rowing up the river, some miles above Bangkok, we came to an island on which was built a palace. We asked the boatman what it was.

"That is one of the King's Palaces," he replied, "to which His Majesty comes for a few days now and then. But it is somewhat wanting in accommodation, for he can bring only two hundred of his wives with him."

And he sighed gloomily at the unhappy fate of the six hundred thus temporarily separated from the Sun and Moon and all the Stars of Heaven.

The eight hundred wives were considered part of the King's state, and many of the alliances were dynastic, and not very closely connected with the beauty or attractions of the lady. Some, too, were more hostages than love-birds. Thus the Governor of a great province like Zimmé would voluntarily, or by special request, send one of his daughters to be married to the King, as an additional bond of allegiance.

They said the King did not know half his wives by sight, but he had undoubtedly to clothe and feed them, and it is really rather a terrible thought, eight hundred wives running loose at Woolland's, or Benoist's, or all wanting stalls at the Opera on the same, or even different, nights.

The Mikado had, I think, just descended to earth when we were in Tokio. In ancient days his feet were not allowed to touch the earth. But we certainly saw him dressed in a French uniform and driving in a carriage. He may possibly have been lifted into the carriage, but I think the dynasty had become so far absolved from ancient regulations as to allow of his walking, anyway thus far. The old



dual monarchy had just been abolished where the Mikado was the spiritual head and the Shogun the *de facto* ruler. In those days the Mikado was in reality a prisoner in his own palace, hedged about with spiritual ordinances, such as the one mentioned above, that set him up as too holy to put foot on this sinful earth. The Shogun, who was a soldier and generally a very able one, meanwhile practically ruled the country.

A characteristic of our Royal Family is its naturalness and simplicity. When the Duke and Duchess of Connaught were in India they thoroughly enjoyed their tour of military service there.

It was to them an entirely new life, away from many of the irksome duties of Royalty in Europe. The Duke lived as a plain General of Division, and the Duchess as the General's wife.

This was brought home to me one night when passing through Delhi. There was that night one of the weekly, or fortnightly, subscription dances. The subscription was only Rs.2 (2s. 8d.) a head, and ladies free. Only the keenest dancers generally go to these, and my hostess being one carried me off in her train. Arrived there, we found the dance taking place in a large badly lit room, but with a first-class small band, and excellent floor.

There were not more than fifteen couples all told, but amongst these, and evidently enjoying themselves greatly, were the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. The only difference between the Duke and any other General, was that his A.D.C. negotiated with the blushing and delighted damsel, who was next to have the honour of dancing with H.R.H.

I was standing at the door when the A.D.C. came up to a lady next me and said :

"H.R.H. will have much pleasure in dancing the next dance with you."

“ Oh ! but I have got a partner already, and I couldn't possibly throw him over. Could I ? ”

“ Try,” said the A.D.C. with his best smile.

And she did.

Whilst the Duke of Connaught was commanding the Rawal Pindi Division, an Officer under his command earned the Stanhope Gold Medal for saving life, the highest distinction the Humane Society can award.

One dark night, walking home from Mess, were two Officers of the 45th Sikhs, Captain H. N. McRae and Captain H. Holmes. Captain McRae was a light-built, wiry Officer, Captain Holmes was a giant, of great strength and muscle. As they were walking up the road they heard mysterious calls for help, and could not at first imagine where they came from.

Then one of them had a brain wave and exclaimed :

“ I believe there is someone down that well.”

Proceeding to the well, which was close to the roadside, and leaning over, no doubt was left as to whence the calls came. It was the lusty voice of a British soldier shouting for succour.

On every Indian well is a light windlass, by means of which an Indian rope, of precarious construction, lets down buckets and such-like light articles, where-with water is drawn.

The two Officers consulted together, and as a result it was decided that Captain McRae, who was the light weight, should be let down into the well by means of the aforesaid precarious rope, lowered hand over hand by the stalwart Captain Holmes. It being quite rightly decided that the windlass, being of highly inefficient Indian workmanship and material, would undoubtedly break under the strain.

Handsomely Captain McRae was let down, and reached the water level safely. There he found a

trumpeter of the Royal Artillery clinging on for dear life to a protruding brick.

Sustaining and encouraging the trumpeter, who apparently dropped into the well whilst making a short cut across the compound and had had therein a long and painful experience, Captain McRae shouted up to his friend :

"Do you think you can draw us both up ? The man's insensible."

"Yes, I think so," was the cheery reply of the giant on top, "if the bally old rope will stand it. Anyway, let's try."

So Captain McRae bound and clasped the trumpeter to his bosom, and shouted :

"Righto ! heave all."

Captain Holmes was a very powerful man indeed, a hero amongst the Sikhs on account of his magnificent physique and herculean strength. But he had several things against him, the most potent being a rotten rope meant only for buckets of water, and further, having no pulley or even smooth surface to pull it over. Only the rough brick edge of the well.

As far as strength went he was equal to the task, and by colossal effort pulled two full-grown Englishmen, and one a trumpeter in the Royal Artillery, some way up. The well was eighty-eight feet deep, with twelve feet of water in it. Then unfortunately came a weak part of a weak rope against the sharp edge of the well, with the result that it snapped. A resounding smack on the water announced the fact, whilst Captain Holmes naturally took a somersault backwards.

Nothing discouraged, the broken end was let down, and Captain McRae, fishing up his broken end, tied the two together, and another strenuous effort was made by Captain Holmes. But again the rope broke, and the two soused down again into the

water. I forget how many times the effort was renewed, and with one man at a time, but even then the rope broke. Captain Holmes, therefore, first shouting words of encouragement down the well, dashed off to find another rope. Ropes and bits of string and other necessities of life are easily to hand when not wanted. But in the middle of the night in a large Cantonment, one may find the right article at once, or not do so till next morning.

Captain Holmes' luck, like that of most brave men, was in, and he found the rope. Some say it was the tug-of-war rope lying on a neighbouring parade ground, and some say it was a twisted combination of neighbouring tent ropes. Anyway, he got it in time, and let it down.

"All right below there?" he shouted.

"Yes, old boy, but be quick. The gunner is heavy as lead. I think he has fainted."

By this time servants from the neighbouring house, and stray passers-by, had collected, so the haulage power was safe.

"Tie the gunner on first. Sailor knot and no damn granny, and we'll have him up in a jiffy, and then you too."

But Captain McRae, in the deep dark of that well, finding the trumpeter insensible, could not manage this. The only way was again to support the trumpeter and go up together.

Thus at last they were drawn to the surface, an insensible trumpeter and a very gallant Officer and gentleman.

The Duke of Connaught recommended both Officers for the Humane Society's Medal, which in due course they received.

At the end of the year the Royal Humane Society decides which is the most gallant act of the year, and for it bestows the Stanhope Gold Medal. The

Gold Medal for that year went most rightly to Captain McRae.

Another Gold Medal won by a soldier was that of Captain Scrase-Dickins of the Highland Light Infantry.

He was voyaging home from India on sick leave on board the P. and O. mailboat. And besides being an invalid, he was feeling not very well owing to the roughness of the sea. The ship was then running up the Red Sea, and Captain Scrase-Dickins was lying more or less *hors de combat* on a long chair on deck.

A cry arose, "Man overboard," and weak and ill as he was, Scrase-Dickins at once rose and dived overboard into a very nasty sea. Talking to the captain of the ship afterwards, he said that there was really little more than a dog's chance of picking up a man in a sea like that. It was not a sea mountains high, but a nasty choppy sea, bad for boats, and wherein it was exceedingly difficult to distinguish a man's head. Moreover, the mailboat was running at full speed, and a big ship gets a lot of way on her and takes a lot of stopping.

But once again fortune favoured the brave, and both Captain Scrase-Dickins and the man he rescued were picked up, to the great relief and joy of the passengers.

For this signal act of bravery and devotion Captain Scrase-Dickins received the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society, and later the Gold Medal for the bravest act of the year.

However, we have rather wandered away from the rulers of the world, and will return via Mr. Roosevelt. We had a good many opportunities of meeting the late President of the United States and of hearing him speak, and he most kindly asked us to stay with him at Oyster Bay. We were greatly and favourably impressed with Mr. Roosevelt, an honest,



strenuous man, with the eyes and views of a world-wide statesman. He could look beyond the coasts of America. For, curiously enough, though America is territorially a large country, the views of a very large section are distinctly limited. As an instance of Mr. Roosevelt's wide views; he was telling us that during the Boer War a Boer delegation came to America to ask for mediation.

The delegates came to see him and ask for his support, and his answer was in some such words as these :

" Though I am a Dutchman myself, for my ancestors only came to America eighty-three years ago, as such you have my sympathy. And also because one always from a sporting feeling backs the little one against the big one, yet I consider that it is for the good of South Africa that Anglo-Saxon rule should predominate there. Therefore I myself would not raise a finger to prevent it."

Mr. Roosevelt is a great believer in the Anglo-Saxon race, and the English language, as most wholesome factors in the government of the world.

He is equally averse to the Germans and to Teutonic influences. At one of his big public meetings at Buffalo he took as his text the Monroe Doctrine, and was very emphatic and eloquent on the point that no European Power should have a footing on the American Continent. Our American friends kept nudging us during the speech, and whispering facetious remarks in all good humour.

That evening, talking to Mr. Roosevelt with reference to his great speech, I mentioned that the British already owned as much or more territory on the American Continent as the United States themselves.

" Quite so," said Mr. Roosevelt. " I wasn't talking about the past, I was talking about the future. I was talking at the Germans, and I was

talking straight. They are trying to get a footing over here and we won't have it. Now, William is a very worthy young man, but he is too hot-headed. That is about the size of it, and we want to put a stop at once, and firmly, to any of his projects over on this Continent."

Mr. Roosevelt was a great President and worthy ruler of a great nation, and many of us who are friends of America regret that he is not their ruler now. There would have been no submarine outrages or Belgian atrocities, we think, if he had been. America need not have gone to war, but as head of a great confederacy of neutral countries she could have taken a strong and commanding position, and insisted that the ordinary rules of civilised warfare were observed. The Germans would have climbed down to that at once.

## CHAPTER XV

### LORD ROBERTS, LORD KITCHENER, AND OTHER GENERALS

Lord Roberts—A Very Great Man—His Courage—70 Years Old in the Boer War—His Final and Great Effort—Lies in St. Paul's with Nelson and Wellington—Contrast between Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener—Both Great Soldiers—Lord Roberts's Kindness and Consideration—Wonderful Memory—Thought for the Bereaved—Lord Kitchener's Disapproval—Burying the Hatchet—First Meeting with Lord Kitchener—His Escape from the Boers—Egypt his Monument—Lord Cromer's Influence—Lord Kitchener's Power of Intuition—Lord Wolseley in the Soudan—A Great Reformer—"Political Generals"—Keeping before the Public—The Shower of Medals—A Pint of 'Arf and 'Arf—The Debt of the Army to Lord Wolseley—Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien—A Born Leader of Men—Mons and Le Cateau—Sir W. Penn Symons—His Toasts—Sir Douglas Haig—As a Fag at Clifton—As I.-G. of Cavalry—Sir William Robertson—His First Commission—Work at Simla—The Staff College—The Brain of the Army—Two Anonymous Generals—The Flagstaff at Umballa—The Battle of the Standard—A Pusillanimous Staff Officer—The Heroic Garrison Engineer—The Triumph of the Lady—Sir Edmund Barrow—Sir James Willcocks—General Bannatine-Allason

**L**ORD ROBERTS was a very great soldier, who will in history be placed alongside Marlborough and Wellington. He was one of the bravest and most stout-hearted Generals Great Britain has produced, possessing also a personal magnetism which, by securing the devoted attachment of the soldiers, added greatly to his military value. His march to Kabul in 1879 and the battle of Charasiah was one of the finest feats of his career, or in history, and far eclipsed his better-known march from Kabul to Kandahar. Again shut up in Sherpur in deep snow, surrounded

by immensely superior numbers of Afghans, cut off from India 170 miles distant, his heart never failed for a moment. He was as brave and strong as ever, and, defeating the encircling hordes, emerged victorious.

At the age of seventy and when most men are past activity, when the horizon was darkest in South Africa, he took command, and at once the sun shone and the tide turned. His strategy and tactics were of the highest, and had it been possible to drop the curtain, and leave the War to Lord Roberts and the soldiers, it would have been over in a year. But political considerations of the very weightiest description, and which have since proved most sound, intervened, and thus the war became a lengthy one of attrition. In his later life, relieved of active command, Lord Roberts spent those years of rest he had so nobly earned in a strenuous and unremitting effort to rouse his countrymen to the German danger, endeavouring with all the weight of his great name to induce the politicians of both Parties to sink their parochial differences and to unite in an effort of foresight and preparation. Perhaps that was the noblest effort of a noble life.

Had Lord Kitchener, when he returned from India, joined Lord Roberts in this patriotic crusade there is little doubt that success would have crowned the strenuous and prolonged efforts of the National Service League.

In St. Paul's Cathedral Lord Roberts now lies in the sublime company of England's greatest sons. And beside are Nelson and Wellington, making thus an heroic trio who have deserved well of the Empire which they served so well.

There could be no greater contrast between two men than between Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener. Their personality, methods, and manners were entirely dissimilar. Yet they both rose to be great

soldiers. Lord Roberts was the modern Bayard, *Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*. Lord Kitchener was fashioned more on the lines of Bismarck. Both were born British, but one developed into the highest type of English gentleman, the other acquired more Teutonic characteristics. It would therefore be somewhat difficult for an honest admirer of Lord Roberts to be an equally honest admirer of Lord Kitchener.

Of Lord Roberts everyone who came in contact with him has delightful reminiscences. He had the kindest and largest heart in the world and never forgot anybody ; but at the same time he was the hardest and flintiest of disciplinarians when occasion required. We who served with him in Kabul, and in India, can well recall that essential trait. It is nearly forty years ago, but I remember exactly first meeting Lord Roberts.

The garrison at Kabul after the siege of Sherpur was paraded for the distribution of rewards for gallantry to the soldiers. I was then in The Guides, and the Infantry of that Corps was drawn up in quarter column, and right behind the rearmost line the last joined subaltern was standing. Lord Roberts came along the front of the regiment, stood a few seconds and glanced over it, and in rear of those eight hundred men at once noticed a new Officer.

" Who is that new Officer ? " he asked the Colonel.

" That's Younghusband, just joined from the 17th Foot."

" Call him up, I should like to make his acquaintance."

So I was hustled forth by the Adjutant, and stood before the great man.

" How do you do ? Glad to meet you. You are a lucky young fellow to have joined such a splendid regiment. Good-bye, good luck."



And from that day forth he never failed to recognise me under the most unlikely conditions. Here is one instance. One day, not long before the Great War, I was standing looking into Asprey's window. Reflected in the glass I noticed passing me a gentleman in a top-hat. I did not look round, and was continuing to gaze at the enticing and opulent things in the window, when I felt a tap on my shoulder.

"Hullo! Younghusband. How are you?"

It was Lord Roberts, and he had not seen me for seven years, and had not a notion I was in England!

But he went one better than that.

"How are the old Guides? Going strong as ever? By the way, did you win the Regimental Tournament? I saw you got through the semi-finals."

Lord Roberts not only recognised an officer in the street after seven years, but recollected his regiment, and even that it had recently been playing in a Polo Tournament!

Another instance of Lord Roberts's wonderful memory and kindness of heart occurred during the Boer War. My brother-in-law, Gordon Wood, was killed in action. How Lord Roberts remembered that my wife's maiden name was Wood, and that Gordon was her brother, was wonderful; but that he should, amidst the enormous work and responsibilities of a great campaign, have found time to think of the bereaved, was even a greater tribute to his marvellous kindness and sympathy. I happened to be in England at the time mending up a wound, and Lord Roberts sent me a personal wire conveying the sad intelligence, and asking me to break it to his old father before he could see it in the papers.

Lord Roberts's telegram arrived in time, just beating the newspapers by an hour, and not only softened the blow, but was a wonderful consolation to Gordon Wood's father and sisters.



*Photo*

*Llloyd & Fry*

THE LATE LORD KITCHENER AS A MAJOR IN EGYPT IN 1884



Of Lord Kitchener there are many anecdotes, but these may well be left to his biographer. For many years he highly disapproved of me, probably because I did not see eye to eye with him in India, and he could not tolerate anyone disagreeing with him. But the hatchet was completely buried one day just before the Great War, at Welbeck. The Duke of Portland was giving a big lunch at which Lord Kitchener was present and so was I. Before lunch, Lord Kitchener was seen pushing his way through a crowd of distinguished guests, and everyone looked to see what he was aiming at. I was at the moment looking the other way, talking to a lady, when I heard someone say, "How do you do, Younghusband?"

I turned round, and there was Lord Kitchener with his hand out.

What he said is not the least concern to anyone else; but it buried the hatchet there and then.

My first meeting with Lord Kitchener was on the field of battle in South Africa. De Wet had captured the best part of a Militia regiment at Roodeval, and Lord Methuen was trying to retrieve the prisoners. The Infantry of the pursuit came up against a long line of kopjes strongly held, and Lord Methuen told me to take my regiment, the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, and see what could be done. Finding the Infantry still held up, we trotted round the left flank, and after going through a pretty heavy fire found ourselves in flank and rear of the kopjes, and with the Boer ponies in full view.

We had just dismounted to fire on the Boers, when several shrapnel fell amongst us, one shell alone accounting for eleven casualties. Thinking perhaps the shells might be from our own gunners, I sent the Adjutant off to warn our Artillery of our position. On his way back he was hailed by "a

big red-faced man, don't know who he is," who asked him who he was.

"Tell your C.O. to go and take those wagons lying out there."

Being under Lord Methuen's orders I sent the Adjutant back to ask who the big red-faced man was. He returned to say it was Lord Kitchener, who was looking on at the battle.

Our next meeting with Lord Kitchener was on the occasion when he was very nearly taken prisoner by the Boers. This also was near Roodeval on the Rhenoster River. We were in laager near the railway line, and Lord Kitchener's special train was halted for the night on the line not very far off. In the night the Boers, seeing a seemingly unprotected train on the line, attacked it, little knowing who was in it. The train was riddled with bullets, but Lord Kitchener and his Staff happily escaped, and came back along the line on foot to the nearest laager.

Lord Kitchener's name and fame will in history not be mainly connected with South Africa or India or even the Great War, but with Egypt. There he was undoubtedly a great man, a great administrator, ruler, and soldier. He had been there the greater part of his career, knew the people and local conditions thoroughly, and had learnt from his great predecessor, Lord Cromer, how to govern and deal with them.

Lord Kitchener had a power of intuition possessed by few men, but by many women. A woman will express a decided opinion on some subject, or concerning some person. She can give no reason for her verdict and perhaps has no special knowledge, but she intuitively feels she is right, and very often is. In the same way Lord Kitchener would order a thing to be done, which might appear quite impossible ; he could not perhaps explain how it was



to be done, but intuitively he seemed to see the job accomplished, and it generally was. Whether his intuition was always rightly directed is another matter.

As illustrating this faculty Sir George Gorringe, who had served much under Lord Kitchener in Egypt, gave me one of his experiences.

Lord Kitchener sent for him one day, and opening out a map, said: "You are to make a railway (or it may have been a canal) from here to here," pointing at the map.

Sir George took the map away, and, after studying the question carefully, came to the conclusion that the project was not feasible. Knowing Lord Kitchener he did not, however, raise difficulties, but went back to him and asked his advice, as a brother sapper, as to how the scheme was to be executed.

"I haven't the remotest notion," replied His Lordship; "that's your job. Get along and do it."

And curiously enough, though Lord Kitchener was a Royal Engineer himself of much experience, and did not know himself how to execute the order, yet it proved to be possible, and Sir George Gorringe, after overcoming great difficulties, accomplished the task.

Lord Wolseley was another great soldier of the Victorian era, under whom we had the honour of serving in the Soudan. In those days there was supposed to be great rivalry between Lord Wolseley and Lord Roberts. Lord Wolseley had long been dubbed by the Press as "our only General," but when Lord Roberts emerged triumphant from the Afghan War he came to be known as "our only other General." The Wolseleyites, as they were called, did not like this; and we who had served under Lord Roberts did not like the Wolseleyites. There seemed to be too much writing and pro-

fessional pushing about it to appeal to the modest soldier ; and some people were inclined quite wrongly to dub Lord Wolseley as a "political General." That was a new phrase in those days. As rather a cynical gentleman put it : "Once you become a General, never care a dam' about the War Office, or Selection Boards. Keep in with the politicians and you will be all right."

The last fifteen years have perhaps been not altogether without examples of the mundane wisdom of this advice. But it does not seem quite right somehow.

I only met Lord Wolseley once or twice during the campaign, and generally there was a newspaper correspondent on the near horizon. For Lord Wolseley was quite frank about keeping before the public. One day he overtook a convoy of which I had charge.

"Who is in command here ? " with a smart snap.

"I am, sir."

"How many camels have you ? "

"Five hundred, sir."

"Why do you marshal them like that ? "

"Because it is the best way of getting through the bush, sir."

And so on for five or ten minutes. All of which appeared under one of those painful headings, which the Press uses to tickle the public.

Lord Wolseley was the man who first started the shower of modern medals. He used to say that lots of medals made a man feel brave, though he may never have seen a shot fired ; and, moreover, impressed others, made the Service popular, and attracted recruits.

Consequently for the Egyptian War of 1882 two medals were issued, and so wide and generous was the distribution that even the stewards on the ships, and soldiers who had never set foot in Egypt



*Photo*

*Elliott & Fry*

REV. J. W. ADAMS, V.C.

*From a photograph taken when he had just received the Victoria Cross, Kabul, 1879*



received both. Indeed, one Officer who though originally ordered to Egypt, had never left Rawal Pindi in India, got two medals, two Orders, and a brevet! Naturally he returned these, but that was the spirit of the new era.

This profusion led incidentally to a somewhat serious riot at Gibraltar, where there were stationed together two regiments, one of which was covered with Egyptian medals, earned on board ship in Alexandria harbour, a hundred miles from any fighting, whilst the other had none.

One night into the canteen of the be-medalled regiment came a full private of the non-medalled regiment.

Tapping the counter smartly, he, in a loud and commanding voice, ordered :

"Here, barman! A pint of 'arf and 'arf. Egyptian Medals an' Stars."

"Belts off and give 'im 'ell," shouted someone.

So off came the belts, which were used in those days as a very hefty offensive weapon in a street row, and the battle began. From small beginnings it grew to greater, till at last the best part of the two regiments were engaged in deadly strife over that pint of 'arf and 'arf.

Lord Wolseley's great claim to distinction lies in his initiation of the principle that hard study and hard work are absolutely essential for a modern Officer. And that it is quite possible to be good at polo, or cricket, and also to pass through the Staff College.

Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien is a stage senior to me, but we have often met, and served together. We just overlapped on the Staff at Umballa under Sir W. Penn Symons, and next trekked together under Lord Methuen in South Africa. He always impressed one, not only as a scientific Staff College trained soldier, but as a born leader of men. There



are many exceedingly clever and exceedingly well-read soldiers, but they are no leaders of men. They lack an indefinable attribute which curiously enough no man seems to be able to acquire. It is born with some, through perhaps many generations of ancestors; others are born without it, and never acquire it. Sir Horace is one of the few happy possessors of this invaluable asset to a Commander. It was noticeable when he commanded his Brigade in South Africa, his Division in India, and still more markedly in the great retreat from Mons, and the battle of Le Cateau.

I forget whether Sir Horace was on Sir W. Penn Symons's Staff when he was given a little cup by the Staff. Every night of his life he used to drink a toast. These were:

Monday—Our Men.

Tuesday—Our Women.

Wednesday—Our Swords.

Thursday—Ourselves.

Friday—Our Religions.

Saturday—Sweethearts and Wives (and he would add gravely, "May they never meet").

Sunday—Absent Friends.

On the little cup these toasts were inscribed.

Sir Penn told us that these were the toasts always drunk nightly, after "The King," by the Duke of Wellington, during the Peninsular War.

Here are one or two early recollections of Sir Douglas Haig. Firstly, a nice-looking, clean little boy, in an Eton jacket and collar, walking up the aisle of the Chapel at Clifton College. Next, the same boy, standing with his back to the chapel wall as a cricket fag, whilst one of the XI was having his practice at the XI net. From that day forth we never met till Sir Douglas was a Major-General and Inspector-General of Cavalry in India. And



GENERAL SIR HORACE SMITH-DORRIEN, COMMANDED A BRIGADE IN THE  
BOER WAR, 1899—02



there the rôles were reversed, for whereas in old days it was open to me to kick a fag if he didn't do his job properly, it was now open to Sir Douglas to kick me, being only the Colonel of a regiment ! As he came forward to meet me, even after all those years, at once to be recognised was the clean, nice-looking boy, in the Eton jacket and collar.

I have often wondered since whether I ever really did kick Sir Douglas when he was a fag at Clifton, but certainly cannot remember having done so.

Working in the office of the Intelligence Branch at Simla, I first met Sir William Robertson. He had recently been promoted from the ranks, and was then a Second Lieutenant. An extraordinarily hard-working and zealous Officer, he struck one then, but never in the wildest imaginings of anyone, certainly not in Sir William's own modest dreams, did we see before us the great brain that was to direct a European War. One day in office he remarked :

" I have no friends or interest, and not a bob in the world ; and what becomes of me after this job is over God only knows."

For many years I neither heard of him, nor saw him, but one day in the Mess picked up an official magazine and therein read his opening, or closing, address to the students at the Staff College. It was one of the finest pieces of instructional oratory that has ever been delivered.

That stamped the man. One who could educate himself up to delivering a lecture like that, before undoubtedly the most critical military audience in England, must be a great man.

But there is a considerable gulf between a great lecturer and the man who can perform what he lectures. And that gulf Sir William Robertson has bridged.

I have never met Sir William to speak to since

early Simla days, but happened to sit behind him in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery when Mr. Lloyd George was making his great speech on taking up the Premiership. Sir William's back looked, as of old, a strong and strenuous back, and set on it is a good, square, honest, British head, such as is wanted to see us through the Great War.

Rather a shocking affair occurred at Umballa a year or so before the Boer War. The General was ordered off to command a Division in the Tirah Campaign, and another General was sent to take his place at Umballa. Both Generals were married. At Umballa, as in most Indian stations which are the headquarters of Divisions or Brigades, there is one house which is ear-marked as the General's house, and has been occupied by one after another for generations. In front of the General's house is a flagstaff on which flies the Union Jack, when the General is in residence. At Umballa this was a particularly imposing affair, not a single mast, but one with a platform about twelve feet up and then another mast on up from that; the whole thing having the appearance of the mainmast of a large sailing ship.

When the General went to Tirah he left his wife in the General's house. And when the new General arrived with his wife they went to an hotel, and waited for the lady in possession to turn out. After a week or so it became perfectly evident that the former General's wife had no intention whatever of turning out, for she had not even commenced to pack or remove her furniture. The flagstaff stood before the door, but, of course, no Union Jack could fly from it, and no sentry paced up and down outside.

So the new General told the C.R.E. to put up a small pole before his door, and flew the Union Jack from that. Then he came to me who happened to be one of his Staff Officers and said :



"You must turn that woman out. That's my house, and she has no right to keep me out of it."

Now I am fairly brave, as men go, but the bare thought of tackling my late General's wife made me feel exceedingly unwell.

"She must be out by the end of the week," added the new General.

Having lunched carefully and well, and topped it up with a large glass of No. 1 Port, I took the remnants of my courage in one hand and a large bunch of roses (the only ones in the place) in the other, marched heroically over to the General's house, and found Her Ladyship in. Smoothing the way a little with the roses, we got insensibly on to the subject of vases to put them in; and so on from one thing to another, till we arrived at the size of rooms and of houses; and then of this room, and this house.

"You must feel quite lost in a huge drawing-room like this," solicitously.

"Oh! No. I love big rooms. I just roam about in them. I like feeling spacious."

"Yes, quite so. Just a nice drawing-room, and dining-room, and bedroom. But this huge house and all these spare rooms?"

"I know exactly what you are at," smiled the lady sweetly. "You've come from those people to try and turn me out. Not if I know it, dear boy, and you may tell them so flat. Here I am, and here I am going to remain."

It was an exceedingly sad-faced Staff-Officer who went back with this ultimatum to his new General.

"Won't turn out, won't she, damn her? Paid the rent, and can't be? Well, anyway, I'll have that flagstaff. Have it dug up and planted opposite my quarters."

This was indeed terrible; but even the greatest coward has to obey orders. I thought, however, I

would break the matter gently, and, happening to dance with Her Ladyship that evening, I mentioned artlessly that a great bare flagstaff in front of her door was a terrible eyesore ; and, besides, with its guy ropes and stays it took up a lot of room. Might almost make another lawn-tennis lawn if it is removed.

" I'll just have it taken down for you, and put my *mali* on to turf the place over and make quite a nice lawn of it."

" If you dare touch that flagstaff I'll never speak to you again," said the lady with much emphasis.

It was then that the craft they inculcate into you at the Staff College, tact they call it, came in.

Next day I sent for the Garrison Engineer, and said unto him :

" Look here, Appletart, my boy, you know that flagstaff on the General's lawn. Well, it's got to be removed, and it's your job as Garrison Engineer to do so."

He also was a brave man, but he turned pale.

" Those are the General's orders, my son, and you've jolly well got to obey them. But, look here, don't make a fuss and worry in the daytime, with all your beastly coolies yelling and shouting. Just go in the middle of the night and dig up the blessed thing. And if you or your men make a sound to disturb Her Ladyship, I'll kill the lot of you."

The Garrison Engineer went off like the young man who once had great possessions.

My house was next door, but not a sound did I hear all night, and was feeling rather afraid that the Garrison Engineer's heart had failed him. But it was all right in the morning, the flagstaff was gone.

Then I went on three days' leave, just to soften the blow.

On my return the very first person I ran into was Her Ladyship, simply beaming.

"I am awfully sorry——" I began.

"Sorry? Rot! Haven't you heard?"

My heart sank within me, but not before it had heartily cursed the Garrison Engineer. He had evidently made a mess of it.

"No. What?" in a faint, far voice.

"Why it's simply splendid! Some horrible person, the General himself probably, came in the middle of the night and dug up the flagstaff, but it was rotten with age and broke off short! But they have planted it, as it is, before the new General's door, and it looks too funny for words. I drive round that way every day of my life, and laugh till I cry. You are really not such a bad old thing after all. Come to lunch."

Driving past the transplanted flagstaff it really was a sad affair. It looked like the juremast on a wreck, with a signal of distress flying from it.

Sir Edmund Barrow was one of those who, in very good company, fell under Lord Kitchener's displeasure. There is little doubt that Lord Kitchener at one time was a little spoilt by the Press and Public, and could brook no views or opinions, however sound, opposed to his own. He used to openly remark that apparently he could do no wrong, and that he meant to take advantage of this excellent state of affairs as long as it lasted. But he always added, I know they will round on me some day like they did on Lord Roberts. Lord Kitchener commenced his campaign in India by objecting to the powers which the Military Department had gradually usurped, at the expense of the Commander-in-Chief. There was a good deal in this argument, and he gained his point.

Encouraged by this success he next attacked the Military Member of Council, and succeeded in getting him abolished, and his Department reduced, and recast, and placed under the Commander-in-

Chief—instead of being independent, and under the Viceroy. Having got so far Lord Kitchener looked for the next stronghold to attack, which happened to be the Viceroy himself. It soon, then, became a plain question for the Government at home to decide, whether the Viceroy or Lord Kitchener was to be supported. The Government supported Lord Kitchener, and consequently the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, resigned.

Sir Edmund Barrow was one of the high officials in the crumbling Military Department, whose allegiance was directly due to the Viceroy. Lord Kitchener offered to make him Chief-of-the-Staff, Lord Curzon offered to make him head of the reconstructed Military Department. Sir Edmund Barrow never received either appointment. Lord Kitchener appointed another Chief-of-the-Staff and insisted himself on nominating the head of the reconstructed Military Department, though that official had always been designedly not under the Commander-in-Chief's patronage, or in his gift.

However, Sir Edmund Barrow, being a soldier of high attainments and much experience, weathered the storm and afterwards, in due course, commanded a Division and an Army with conspicuous ability, and is now a member of the India Council.

Sir James Willcocks is one of those who has made his way to the front in a remarkable manner. We were at Sandhurst at the same time and have done much soldiering together in many parts of the world. Sir James was a very bright, good-looking boy, and "caught on" at once. He always took great care from the very beginning that any job he was put to was well done. He put his whole heart into it. Most of his earlier campaigns were served in the Transport Department, and his great pride in the turn out and condition of his mules was a revelation, in days when pack transport was

rather a hand-to-mouth affair. As a commander of troops Sir James first came to notice in the successful Ashantee Campaign, which was being carried on at the same time as the Boer War.

Later he was made famous by *Punch* with a cartoon entitled "Willcocks' Week-end Wars." This was in compliment to the manner in which two very quickly and well-managed expeditions across the Indian Frontier, which Sir James Willcocks commanded, were brought to a speedy and successful conclusion.

I was negotiating once with General Bannatine-Allason about the purchase of a horse for my wife, and wrote to ask him whether it carried a lady. To this he replied :

"I bought the horse from Major Smith (*nom de plume*), and I saw his wife riding it frequently. I know nothing about Mrs. Smith—except that Major Smith dislikes her intensely."

General Bannatine-Allason, as a Major, taught me my work as an amateur gunner when attached to his Battery. He was the smartest of Battery-Commanders, and a real good soldier, as he proved in South Africa.

In concluding this chapter it may perhaps be mentioned that it does not profess to be a treatise on British Generals, but merely some casual remarks about those whom the writer has been privileged to meet, and many of whom have been his friends.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THEIR LIVES IN THEIR HANDS

The Frontier Officer—Not Easily Taken Aback in Sudden Emergency—A Tragedy of Three—Major Dodd—In Daily Peril—Capt. Butler of The Guides—The Khattuk Dance—Shot from Behind—Murderer Hanged—Major Dodd and Capt. Brown Homeward Bound—Shot by his Orderly—Pursuit of Murderer—Lieut. Hickie's Gallantry—Eight Killed or Wounded—A Snapshot Ends the Fight—The Deputy-Commissioner holds a *Jirgah*—Raiders Reported—Ransoms—Their Use and Abuse—In Hot Pursuit—Skilled Trackers—Cavalry Cover 80 Miles—Gang Run to Earth—A Night Watch—The Gang Accounted For—Another Raid—Cavalry and Infantry Start—Terrorised Villagers—In the Village Mosque—Surrounding the Raiders—Fierce Fight in the Night—Raiders Break Out—Christmas Eve—A Midnight Call—The Major's Lady—The Squadron Starts—Surrounding the Village—A Brief Encounter—A Casualty—Nearing Home—The Lady and the Dog—A Simple Grave in the East

IN the course of a long life on the Frontiers of India one learns much and sees much. There on the confines of our Empire is to be found at his best the Englishman who has built it and guards it. He has not the least self-consciousness, he poses neither as a hero, a martyr, nor a swash-buckler. He is just the simple gentleman, brave, honest, and cheerful, taking things as they come, such as we like to picture the British Officer.

Year in and year out they live in a constant state of war, or preparation for war. Their vigilance must never relax, and in time grows into a habit of life. "They are not easily taken aback in sudden emergency," as Sir Harry Lumsden expressed it.

On one part of the Frontier on which the writer

was recently stationed there were 165 raids made into British territory in the course of the year by the trans-border tribesmen ; and each and all of these had to be met and dealt with. They were mostly small cattle-lifting raids, or to loot travellers or open villages, but they were made by armed marauders of desperate character and great hardihood, and required hard fighting and tremendous marching to deal with them.

Yet rarely do we hear of these outside the little circle on the Frontier, and medals and rewards rarely reach these hardy warriors. It is possible to serve for thirty years on the Frontier, it is possible to be in a dozen fights in as many months, and yet to leave the service without a single medal.

But, apart from open fighting, the British Officer on the Frontier runs a perennial risk in other ways, as may be gathered from an incident which occurred on the Mahsud-Waziri border, just before the Great War broke out.

My first encounter with Major Dodd was the result of a message from which it appeared that he and Captain Butler were closely besieged in Sarwekai Fort in Waziristan, and that a speedy relief was essential. The relief took place with due celerity after a sixty-mile march, and I was sitting by the roadside whilst the leading regiment completed the work in hand, when a great burly figure came riding by on a small pony.

"Hullo, Dodd!" shouted someone.

"Hullo there!" replied Dodd, and came over to us.

This was none other than the redoubtable Major G. Dodd of the 27th Punjabis, who for several years now had kept the fierce Mahsud-Waziri tribe in the cup of his hand.

He was not the least perturbed, or excited, or elated ; he was just as calm and serene as if he

were walking in to breakfast at home. Yet he had had a narrow escape—a great tribe, which counts 14,000 well-armed warriors, up and out against him. Besieged in an inadequate enclosure commanded at close range from neighbouring heights: the nearest relief sixty miles or more away. But he took it all quite serenely and in the day's work; and was only full of half-bashful apologies at having, as he put it, "dug the brigade out in such infernal hot weather."

Day and night Dodd lived with his life in his hands; threatened by open enemies, or lurking assassins. It was not long after that he had another narrow escape.

It had been so arranged that he should reach his headquarters at Wano by a certain date, in order to be present at an evening entertainment which was to be given in honour of a departing Native Officer. Owing to some unforeseen duty calling him elsewhere, he was unable to arrive on the promised date, and his place at the festivities was taken by Captain H. Butler, of The Guides.

Amongst other entertainments was a Khattuk dance, a wild affair round a camp fire, accompanied by much brandishing of keen-edged swords. Captain Butler was seated in the place of honour watching this performance, with Major Bond, R.E., on one side, and the Subadar-Major on the other. The dancers and spectators work themselves up to a great state of excitement over these dances; and when this excitement was at its highest, a recruit, who had enlisted in the Militia with the express intention of killing a British Officer, decided that his opportunity had arrived.

He had counted on Major Dodd being present, and had intended to kill him; but not being able to find him he took Captain Butler as the next most prominent person, and walking up behind fired

through the back of his chair and instantly killed him. The murderer then took refuge behind some water cisterns, but after firing a few more rounds was taken unhurt, and in due course hanged.

In this connection Major Dodd, a few weeks before in conversation, disclosed a very curious feature in the character of some of the wilder spirits who enlist on the Frontier. A predecessor of his, Colonel Harman, had a few years before been shot dead whilst at dinner in the Mess, by a fanatical sepoy. The sepoy was overpowered and duly hanged. To the memory of Colonel Harman, the Officers and men of the regiment erected a monument in the middle of the fort. It was a plain pillar of grey stone, about the height and shape of Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment. On the base was engraved the usual memorial tablet to the deceased Officer. To ordinary eyes it was, what it was intended to be, a simple monument to a brave and honoured Commanding Officer. Not so to the ignorant recruit from the wild tribes across the border.

As Major Dodd explained, the first thing the recruit asks on seeing this prominent pillar is :

"What is that?"

"That is a monument to the Colonel Sahib who was shot dead by a sepoy," is the reply.

"Wah! Wah!" he says. But what he thinks is :

"What a great hero that sepoy was to have so magnificent a monument erected to commemorate his having killed the Colonel Sahib."

"So," added Major Dodd, "I have given strict orders that no monument of that sort is to be erected here to me, should I share the same fate. For it only stands as a perpetual sign and reminder that if one Sahib can be killed so can another, and in that case he too who fired the shot will have a perpetual monument, which all recruits will see.

And what they see they talk about at their homes, and fed by the pernicious preaching of their mullah, go out and do likewise."

In that Fort at Wano in Waziristan live at most seven British Officers, and sometimes when the others are on tour only two or three, in the midst of a regiment 1500 strong, in the ranks of which may be many past and potential murderers. The nearest British soldier is at Mooltan, 200 miles distant as the crow flies.

Nothing disturbed, Dodd went on his way as usual, till a couple of months after came a welcome chance of a short run home, a much-needed rest, after years of hard and trying work.

Together with a friend and comrade, Captain Brown of the 58th Rifles, Dodd journeyed down the Gomal Pass, and was staying a few days at Tank, where lies a small border garrison, to settle up affairs before he went home. It was Easter Sunday, and next day he was starting off to catch the mail steamer. He had spent most of the day in arranging various matters, both great and small, connected with his work, and amongst others a case in which his own orderly, a Mahsud-Waziri, was concerned.

This man had originally been in one of the Militia regiments on this border, and on his discharge Dodd, having belief in his integrity, took him on as a private orderly, and treated him with the greatest confidence and kindness. His main duty was at all times to keep a watchful guard over the safety of his master, and especially to guard him against the fanatical attacks of his own tribesmen. That he should be completely and effectively armed for this purpose he was not only provided with a revolver, but Dodd gave him his own sporting rifle, which threw a bullet that would knock down an elephant, and which no charging fanatic could ever get past.

The brother, or other near relation, of this orderly,



had undertaken a small piece of contract work on the new railway which was being built in the vicinity ; and for this work a small sum, about £20, was due to him. The same gentleman had, however, been implicated in a cattle-lifting raid just shortly before, and Dodd told the orderly that before the cheque could be made over the matter of the stolen cattle must be enquired into. This is a recognised form of patriarchal procedure on the Frontier, where crimes and misdemeanours are totalled up against rupees, and a rough balance struck one way or the other.

Having thus settled the case, as he had hundreds before, Major Dodd went out into the garden, and with Captain Brown sat down in basket chairs on the lawn for half an hour or so, awaiting the first Mess bugle, before going to bathe and change for dinner. About twenty yards from where the two Officers were sitting was a low mud wall which divided their compound from the next ; and beyond the wall, running close alongside it, was a privet hedge about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet high with a gap in one place made by servants clambering over the wall and through the hedge.

Captain Brown was sitting with his back to the hedge, and Major Dodd was nearly facing him ; both of them close together. Suddenly a shot rang out, and Captain Brown was shot through the back, the bullet passing through the back of his chair, and immediately sank down. Major Dodd at once started up to confront the danger, but was instantaneously shot down with a bullet high up in the thigh.

At this moment two or three officers were in a neighbouring bungalow about fifty yards off, standing in a separate compound. They also were just about to dress for dinner when they heard the shots. They were wondering what they meant,

when Major Dodd's servants came running in to say that their master, and another Sahib, had been shot by a gang of Mahsuds.

Amongst those who heard this was G. W. C. Hickie, a subaltern in the Royal Artillery, stationed at Tank. This gallant young Officer at once seized a revolver, and dashed off in hot pursuit. It also so happened that just at this time the night guard of Frontier Constabulary was mounting outside the very house occupied by Major Dodd. The men of the guard also at once joined in the pursuit, the general impression being that a gang of from seven to nine Mahsuds had to be dealt with.

At the same time two British Officers of the Frontier Constabulary, a Native Officer, and some men turned out from the compound of the Sessions House, which lay close by. Outside the line of compound walls and hedges was an open space, extending for some hundreds of yards towards the native city of Tank. This open space was dotted about with clumps of palm trees, and there were on it also a few buildings recently erected in connection with the railway.

Directly the pursuit, headed by the gallant Hickie, appeared in the open, a brisk and accurate fire was opened on it. So brisk that the idea was confirmed that a strong gang had to be faced. But the powder being smokeless, in the dusk of the evening it was difficult to locate the exact position of the party. First one man was hit in the hand and then another killed, then two more were shot dead, but, nothing daunted, Hickie charged across the open determined to round up the gang, but when about fifty yards from his goal, which was a clump of palm trees, he was shot down never to rise again.

With deadly precision shots poured from the clump insomuch that there were now eight casualties, six of them fatal. Happily at this moment a

Jemadar of the Constabulary in the waning light just caught sight of a head. He took an instantaneous snapshot ; the head disappeared, and the firing from the clump ceased. The whole incident had only lasted a few minutes, and the gang of Mahsuds turned out to be Major Dodd's orderly alone, armed with his master's sporting rifle.

Before he was killed himself he had taken the lives of three British Officers and three men, and wounded two others. Captain Brown lasted till next day, and Major Dodd for a couple of days, before they joined the gallant throng of soldiers who have died for their King and country. One likes to think of them, that brave and gallant company, looking over the battlements of Heaven, with kindly eyes watching us as we struggle along in the path they have so nobly trod before us.

But one wonders what Major Dodd said to his orderly.

This story has been told not because of its tragic end, but because Major Dodd was such a fine typical Englishman, whose example every boy, or man, might well try to follow. He had a great commanding figure, though it is character, not necessarily height, that gives command ; but he had both, and with it a remarkably calm and imperturbable manner. He never was to be seen in the least perturbed by the most astounding, or most unwelcome, news. He took it without a sign, and issued his orders at once and briefly, and in a manner which showed that he was a man of action who knew his own mind, and whose word was instant law.

In addition to commanding 1500 border soldiers, he held control, on behalf of His Majesty the King, over one of the most turbulent and warlike tribes on our Frontiers. A tribe in which every male is a born

fighter and freelance, and which, as I have said, owns 14,000 trained warriors.

This is one of those tribes which by treaty lies within the British area of control ; self-governed, but under a broad and enlightened British control. The language and character of these wild highlanders Major Dodd knew as none other, and by the sheer force of his individuality he was the uncrowned king of those territories. Knowledge, straight and direct dealing, absolute fearlessness, and a charming personality. These combined to make Dodd the great man he was. We may place him alongside Nicholson, Edwardes, and Cavagnari as one of the great men of the Frontier.

I hope also you will not forget the gallant Hickie, who without a single thought dashed out to the rescue and died pistol in hand like a brave English gentleman. His ship, too, was awaiting him in Bombay ; but twelve hours later, instead of saying cheery good-byes to his friends, we were following his gun carriage and mourning charger, with muffled drums and soft sad music, to a soldier's grave.

. . . . .

The Deputy-Commissioner was holding a *jirgah*. It was the month of May and very hot, and the members of the *jirgah* smelt very high, and the matter under discussion was trivial and wearisome. From under the shade of the shamiana the Deputy-Commissioner cast a tired and bleared gaze at the fierce-blazing rocks, the sand, and stones which were his horizon. He lighted another cigarette. Gently under his breath he cursed the *jirgah* and longed for England. England the green, and cool, and fresh, and beautiful ! As he threw away the burnt match he looked up, and straight in front, on a far ridge, he caught the flash of a helio.



“Hai! Hullo! Mullah Baksh! Give a shout for the signallers, there is someone calling us up.”

But the signallers had seen the call too; and presently, winking and blinking, came through the following message:

“Strong body of raiders held up near Musa Kheyl village. Please requisition troops to capture them.”

It did not take Mr. Bill, the Deputy-Commissioner and a man of action, ten minutes to get his horse, and meanwhile he sent a message to the General Commanding the troops at the nearest Cantonment, asking for help.

What had occurred was this. A strong band of raiders had penetrated some fifty miles within our borders, held up a village in the good old border fashion, and, besides taking any loose cash and gold ornaments that they could find, had kidnapped four Hindu boys. These were sons of rich shopkeepers, whom they hoped to get across the border, and there hold up to ransom by their fond parents.

Formerly Government, taking a fatherly attitude, used to pay the whole or part of the ransom demanded. But taking example from the gentlemen who used to breed snakes with a view to getting the Government reward for killing them, a regular trade in ransoms began to grow up.

Thus one ruffian, who lived in British territory, would arrange with another ruffian, who lived across the border, to come across and kidnap him. Having accomplished the fell deed, with much hullabaloo and blunderbuss discharge, he with blood-curdling threats, carried off his friend to the mountains and there held him up to ransom. When, after much negotiation, further threats, and further bargaining, the ransom had been paid, the two ruffians divided the spoil and each went his way rejoicing. So the payment of ransoms by Government was stopped.



But to get back to our story. The Deputy-Commissioner got to horse and, accompanied by the Constabulary Officer, galloped fifteen miles across country to the metalled road, where his car had been left. The car took them both another fifteen miles, till they again came to unmetalled tracks, and had to take to horses again. Another ten miles and they came to the village where the raiders had been reported as held up. Here they met a mounted police constable who told them that they had been misinformed, and that the raiders had passed onwards and were making for the hills, hotly pursued by armed bands of villagers.

The track of the raiders had been cleverly picked up by skilled trackers in the Police ; and these made out the footmarks of seven men and two children. These had been followed with great skill up stream beds, over rocky plains, and through stubble and scrub. The Cavalry from the Cantonment had also joined in. The trail was now some six or eight hours' old, which meant a long start. The pursuit was continued until nightfall, and on starting again at crack of dawn the Hindu children were found abandoned in a nullah, none the worse for their adventure.

The trackers again took up the trail, which now ran into exceedingly rocky and difficult ground. The village gun-men took up the scent, and the Cavalry scoured the country far ahead, blocking all likely paths to the mountains. And thus the hunt went on all day, till at last towards evening certain news came in that the gang had been located in a dry watercourse with high banks.

The Cavalry had covered from seventy-five to eighty miles, and were now up against a small but desperate gang at bay. All outlaws, each with a price on his head, and led by one of the most desperate characters on the Frontier. Having

exactly located the gang, a close cordon was gradually and carefully drawn round their lair so that there should be no chance of escape during the night. So close was the cordon that some of the soldiers were only thirty yards off the raiders.

The position taken up by the gang was in a deep narrow ditch at the foot of one of the steep sides of a nullah, here only about thirty yards wide. In this ditch the desperadoes were quite invisible from anywhere, and the greatest care had to be taken by the surrounding party to escape being shot on sight if they moved.

Things being thus at a deadlock, the Deputy-Commissioner shouted down to the gang, calling on them to surrender. At first they seemed inclined to do so, but probably, on second thoughts, knowing that a halter was their eventual fate, they decided to fight on.

It was now quite dark and chances of escape increased ; but the cordon was pulled still closer together, and the soldiers were now almost shoulder to shoulder, and had orders to remain so, awake and alert, all night. Still with the fear that this desperate gang might charge out, the Deputy-Commissioner thought of a new device. He ordered brushwood to be collected which, when lighted, was thrown over the edge of the bank on to the gang in the ditch at foot. Partly hoping to smoke them out and partly to give light to the soldiers, who were only thirty yards away on the opposite bank, to get a chance shot. The raiders were heard moving about in the ditch to avoid the falling firebrands, and a few shots were fired into them from opposite, but still they refused to surrender. Just at this time a firebrand, instead of rolling down into the ditch, stuck halfway, and then suddenly flared up. Unhappily at this very moment the British Officer in command of the Cavalry, who with his men was lining the

opposite bank, looked over his entrenchment. The glare lit up his face and with one swift shot passed away another gallant Officer in the service of his King. A sharp fusillade was now opened on the raiders' ditch, and finding it too hot the remnant made a dash for liberty. One man even had the calm deliberation to stop and pick up a dead man's rifle. Even at death's door a trans-border raider could not resist the temptation to steal a rifle.

After a brisk encounter the whole gang were shot down except one man, who broke his way out, badly wounded, and was captured next day.

At first a feeling of pity, or admiration, may be felt for a gang of freelances who put up such a stout fight against superior numbers. But as a matter of fact this class of freebooter is entitled to little pity, and no admiration. He is usually a criminal of the deepest dye, steeped to the lips in murder, and crimes the most atrocious. He will kill at sight out of sheer wantonness, and theft and rapine are his daily pleasure. He is, however, undoubtedly bold and resourceful, of iron frame, impervious to fatigue, hardy and abstemious. No less a man could make the immense treks that he makes, invariably on foot ; whilst on the return journey he is also often heavily laden with loot.

His methods are generally to travel by night, and to lie up by day, till he gets near his objective. This may be thirty or forty miles inside the British frontier. Having got close up the night before, and rested all day, he makes his final dash on the selected village at about nine o'clock on the second night. His objective in the village is generally a rich shopkeeper or banker. Arrived there, part of his gang holds the streets with swords drawn and rifles at full cock, ready to cut down or shoot anyone who moves. Meanwhile the rest pounce on the destined victims and rob them. This accomplished,

the whole gang quickly clears off at a great pace ; moving half at a run and half at a quick walk. They will thus, using little frequented by-paths and cross-country cuts, cover fifteen to twenty miles, and sometimes more, before dawn. Arrived at home the spoil is divided, and the gang disperses till the next time they begin to feel poor, when the operation is repeated.

. . . . .

Lunch was just on the table when a telegram was handed to the General Commanding at an Indian Frontier Station. It was from the Deputy-Commissioner, and stated that a raiding party of thirty-two outlaws was located in a village distant about thirty miles. He asked that a squadron of Cavalry might be sent to help the Border Military Police, and others, to capture them.

The General sent for the Officer Commanding the Cavalry, and was giving him his instructions when in walked the Deputy-Commissioner himself. He explained that he had now learnt that the gang was one of the most desperate on the Frontier ; and he added that a strong force would be required, and tough fighting might be expected before they were captured. He had therefore taken the precaution to commandeer all the local horse-drawn conveyances, which here take the form of two-wheeled dog-carts, so that some Infantry might keep up with the Cavalry. These he placed at the disposal of the General for carrying as many Infantry men as they would hold. Off, then, went two squadrons of Cavalry followed by a string of forty-eight tum-tums and two tongas full of Infantry soldiers.

This was one of those rare cases in which the villagers, or rather one stout fellow who was a village elder, dared to give the authorities timely information. Generally, so terrorised had they



become by these bloodthirsty and relentless raiders from across the border, that they dared not give information for fear of future reprisals. Nay, this headman had gone further, he had actually entrapped the gang. They had been apparently bent on raiding a still more distant village, and demanded from our friend food and concealment for the day before proceeding further. The headman, complying with their request, put them into a mosque, gave them food and drink and tobacco, and bade them lie quiet till the evening. He then immediately sent news to the police and civil authorities, and these passed it on to the military.

The first to arrive on the scene were some Border Military Police and Civil Police, who happened to be handy, and these kept a sharp look-out on the mosque throughout the day. Owing to delay in passing on the news, the Cavalry did not start till 3.5 p.m., and therefore could not be up till late. It was indeed getting quite dusk when the first of the troops began to arrive.

On arrival, accompanied by the Assistant-Commissioner, the Cavalry Commander climbed on to the roof of a house and took a bird's-eye view of the situation. From here it was seen that the raiders were still in the village mosque, surrounded by the Military Police, and heavy firing was going on. The mosque was a building about twenty feet square, with one door opening on to the compound. In the compound were two or three trees, and round it a mud wall about three feet high. Outside the wall on one side was open ground, on another uneven ground with more trees, and on the two other sides the village buildings commenced. The Commander, seeing that this was a hard nut to crack, immediately sent off for guns, and meanwhile disposed his men so as to hold the raiders in.

The Assistant-Commissioner asked for the Border



Military Police to be relieved, as they had had a very strenuous day and required rest. A dismounted troop of Cavalry was consequently sent to line the south wall of the compound, whilst four men were placed on the roof of an adjacent building to command the roof of the mosque, lest the raiders should break out that way. Another party of dismounted Cavalry was sent to cover with fire the open ground in front of the mosque. And one troop was kept in rear, ready to mount and charge, or pursue the enemy, if they broke through the inner cordon. Scarcely had these arrangements been made when sounds of digging were heard in the mosque. Either the raiders were making loopholes or a hole or tunnel by which to escape. The inner cordon was therefore strengthened with a few police bayonets.

At about 7.30 p.m. the first of the Infantry began to arrive, twenty men under Captain Stirling of the 57th Rifles. To him the Cavalry Commander, Major Swanston, 14th Lancers, explained the situation and the plans already made, and directed him with his men to strengthen the inner cordon round the compound wall and with fixed bayonets to hold on stoutly. It was now practically dark, but in taking up their position one of the 57th Rifles was shot. Some twenty minutes later arrived Major Swifte of the 57th Rifles, followed by forty more rifles of his regiment. An attempt was now made by the soldiers to get on to the roof of the mosque, but they had to retreat hurriedly as it was found that the roof was not bullet proof, and the raiders could shoot them at leisure through it. On the other hand, it was now sufficiently apparent that the side walls of the mosque were so thick as to be bullet proof. So the raiders were safe except from bullets which might pierce the door.

More Infantry having now arrived, Major Swans-

ton rode with an escort to inspect the Cavalry dispositions. He first hit off the right picquet N.E. of the mosque and worked his way round to the S.E., and found the picquet line well placed and about 350 yards from the mosque. There had been no time to reconnoitre the ground by daylight, so the physical features had to be guessed. Having completed his inspection, Major Swanston returned to his central position in the village. He had just dismounted and was giving his horse a feed, when he heard the firing, which up to this time had been spasmodic, sometimes more intense than at others, suddenly become furious. Whistles began to blow, and orders to cease fire were shouted.

Major Swanston ran to the S.W. corner of the Musjid, only to hear a shout from his right that the raiders had escaped. A bugle sounded the rally on another side. The report was only too true; the raiders had charged out and made a dash for liberty, killing Captain Stirling as well as several men and wounding others as they pushed through.

But, as it was not known how many of the raiders had charged out and how many remained, the mosque was still closely invested, whilst the Cavalry went off in pitch darkness in pursuit. In about an hour they returned, having with great difficulty accounted for four raiders, for the pursuit was mostly through high green standing wheat, where concealment was easy. For the rest of the night one troop was kept always mounted and a constant patrol was maintained round the village, furnished by another troop.

Shortly after 10.30 p.m. voices were heard in the mosque, and the Assistant-Commissioner opened a parley. The inmates said they were wounded and wanted water. The reply given was that before any assistance could be given they must throw out their rifles; for these people, wounded or unwounded,

are the most treacherous dogs on earth; bar perhaps the Germans. They refused the offer and negotiations ceased.

About midnight a telegram arrived to say that two guns and another company of Infantry were on their way. Necessity is the mother of invention, and it is wonderful how quick the Mountain Gunners get their guns along; sometimes on mules, sometimes towed behind a tonga at full gallop, and sometimes loaded up in a vehicle of any sort.

Later in the night one of the inmates of the mosque crawled out with his rifle, and towards morning another got as far as the doorway with his rifle, which was then taken from him.

By 6 a.m. it was sufficiently light for the cavalry to search the country for escaped raiders and rifles, whilst the Infantry were employed on the same duty in the closer vicinity. It was still not known how many remained in the mosque, but as all was silent it was decided to dig a hole in the roof so as to get a view inside. On arriving on the roof it was found that the raiders had already dug a hole, though whether any of them escaped this way was not quite clear. Digging another hole nearer the centre a lantern was let down by a rope and it was then discovered that there remained only two dead raiders.

This was a very tight and desperate little fight, typical of many that take place on the Frontier. Out of thirty-two men the raiders lost eight killed and four wounded, amongst the killed being two celebrated leaders of outlaw gangs. The loss on our side was one British Officer and six men killed, and seven wounded.

. . . . .

It was Christmas Eve in a Frontier Station, and at a Frontier Mess. There were few officers present,

for the regimental polo team was away playing in a Tournament; whilst others had gone out for Christmas shoots in various parts. But amongst those left behind were the Major, old Long Tom as we called him, and the Boy, so called for obvious reasons. After dinner some played bridge and some snooker, but all went to bed soon after eleven o'clock.

Barely an hour later, as the Boy was sleeping very soundly, he had a sort of distant notion that it was time to get up, and that his bearer was worrying him with morning tea.

"Sahib! Sahib!" murmured the bearer. "A note, a very urgent note, from the Major Sahib."

The Boy stirred a little and muttered, "Oh! go to ——" and the rest died in mumbles.

"It is very, very urgent, Sahib, it is most necessary to awake."

"Heh! What! What the blazes? Hulloo! Luckoo, what's up?"

"Your Honour, an urgent letter from the Major Sahib, and his orderly awaits without."

The Boy, half-awake, fumbled the note open and read:

DEAR BOY,

I hear they are raiding a village thirty miles from here, and I am off with a squadron to try and catch them. You are to come too. We start in three-quarters of an hour. Come over and have a snack first.

Yrs. v.s.,

T. B. T.

The Boy hastily dressed, whilst his bearer went to order his charger; and then walked across the hundred yards or so to the Major's bungalow. Now the Major's lady was always beautiful, but the

Boy thought she had never looked so handsome or lovely as she did in the hasty toilet of that midnight meal. Hot coffee, and toast, and fried eggs, and cold ham ! And to take in their holsters the Major's wife made two little packets, one little packet for the Major, and one for the Boy.

Outside, the faint jingle of bits and clank of stirrups could be heard, and the Major said :

" Now, Boy, we must be off."

" Very good, sir, I'll see that the horses are ready," for the Boy knew the Major and his lady loved each other very much, and would rather say " good-bye " alone.

To be sure, when he came back the beautiful lady's eyes were just brimming, but not quite over, and she said bravely enough, " Good-bye, Boy, and bring my Tom back safe and sound."

And he felt cool soft lips on his forehead, and a tear on his cheek.

" Yes, rather," blundered the Boy ; " and good-bye and good luck ; we'll be back to tea all right, or anyway for Christmas dinner at the Mess. Oh ! hang it, here's Rip turned up ! Will you keep him till I come back ? Thanks awfully. Good-bye."

So Rip the terrier and the lady stood at the window, whilst the soldiers rode away into the bitter dark night and driving rain.

" And now we must go to bed again, dear Rip," said the lady. " You on a nice warm rug by the fire, and I in my nice warm bed." She was a brave lady.

Meanwhile into the biting wind, through the inky darkness, along a scarce visible track, at the head of their squadron, that Christmas morn trotted the Major and the Boy. At first they talked about polo, and then about last Christmas, and from that naturally to Christmas at home ; and then about horses—a lot about horses. But, strangely enough,



little about the work on hand ; and yet not strangely, for that was all simply cut and dried, and wanted no talking about. They were trotting out hard so as to arrive before dawn and interpose an ambush between the raiders and the defenceless village which they hoped to sack or hold to ransom. The last six miles they trotted in silence, and every voice and sound was hushed, and pipe and cigarette stowed away.

When quite close to the village they slowed down, and assisted by one of the troopers whose home it was, they circled silently round it, and took post on the threatened side.

There were two ravines and three footpaths that approached the village from this direction, and up one or other of these the raiders would come. At each point as they came to it the Major left a squad of men, with orders to hide their horses and to take post on foot with their rifles. Three of these picquets had been placed in position, and it was still inky dark and drizzling slightly as the Major and the Boy groped their way along towards the fourth.

Then there came suddenly a short, sharp call in Pushtu, as of one surprised :

“ Who goes there ? ”

For one second everything stood still ; then came a blinding flash, followed by a loud report. Then in quick succession three more.

Silence for another second, and then the answering shots, five, six, seven, a dozen.

Then again dead silence, and then a moan, and a voice whispered :

“ They have hit the Sahib ! ”

“ Not me,” said the Boy cheerfully. “ I am all right, and got one of the devils with my revolver as he ran.”

“ Then it must be the Major Sahib,” said the voice.

The Boy groped his way along a few yards to where the words were spoken ; and there saw, kneeling beside a long drab figure on the ground, the grey-bearded old Native Officer.

Not the Major really ? Not dear old Long Tom, whom everyone loved ?

But so it was.

The Boy took off his cloak and rolled it into a pillow. "Not badly hit, Major, are you ? Have a little whisky ?"

But there was no answer, and no movement.

Then there came a faint whisper, and the Boy bent low to catch it. "My dear—love to her—poor Christmas——" and then a soft sobbing sigh, and the Major had gone on to the land of eternal peace.

"They must be nearing home by now," said the Major's lady to the orderly.

"Get my horse, and come with me, and we will take Rip and meet them. They said they would be back by teatime."

Now the Boy had sent a messenger to break the dreadful news to the poor lady ; but taking a short cut, he had just missed the lady, and the orderly, and the dog.

So these three rode gaily out, laughing and chatting. And Rip chased some sheep, and was severely reprimanded ; and the orderly's horse shied at a buffalo and the buffalo shied at the horse ; and both made the lady laugh, as indeed would anything, for it was a bright and lovely Christmas Day, and she was riding out to meet dear old Tom.

A little further on the orderly said, "I see the dust of the squadron over there, about three miles distant, where the road passes round that spur."

"You have sharp eyes, Zarif, I cannot see any-

thing ; but let us canter on, so as to meet them sooner."

So they cantered on for some miles, and then, at the end of the long straight avenue that lined the road, they saw the squadron.

First came two troopers, the point of the Advance Guard ; then a few hundred yards back five or six men under a Duffadar, as a support. And both these parties looked with sorrow on the lady, and one old soldier muttered low :

" Alas ! how sad the day."

But the lady nodded gaily to them, and passed on.

The slight dust made by these small parties of horsemen cleared away, and there was plainly visible the main body of the squadron advancing about three hundred yards off.

" Hullo ! Zarif, I only see one Sahib riding at the head of the squadron. I do hope nothing has happened to the Chota Sahib."

" The Chota Sahib is doubtless in the rear, seeing that there is no straggling."

" But, I say, Zarif, that *is* the Chota Sahib in front. I know his horse. The Major Sahib must be in the rear."

" Assuredly so, Your Excellency."

At this moment the Boy saw the gladly advancing pair, and Rip, and knew his messenger must have missed them.

" Here, Jowalla Sing, take the squadron home. I will lead the Mem-Sahib apart, and break the dreadful news to her."

" Hullo ! Boy, welcome back ! Gracious ! you do look tired ! And where is my Tom ? "

" Let us get out of the dust a bit," said the Boy.

" Boy ! Boy ! *Where* is Tom ? You don't *dare* say you have allowed anything to happen to him ! "

" Come out beyond the trees, dear lady, and let's talk a little."

"Dear God! Not dead, Boy? Only wounded—badly—say so quick, Boy!"

Just then came in sight, along the road, a little cavalcade of six, and in the midst of it was a curtained litter, borne by four men.

"The last words he whispered to me, dear lady, were, 'My dear love to her.'"

And so another simple grave marks the Borders of our Empire in the East.

## CHAPTER XVII

### INDIA AND THE INDIANS

The Indian Problem—Paternal Government—Laws and Lawyers—The Disturbing Element—Poisonous Polluters of the Political Atmosphere—The Frontier Crimes Act—What India Requires—Ibrahim Khan—His Devotion and Death—The Indian Soldier—Devotion to his Officers—An Old Retainer—Awaiting the Baby Sahib—The Best Indians—The Worst—Kadir Dad—His Devotion to his Master—John of Baghdad—Lord Mayo—"A King Indeed"—His Liberality—Sir Pertab Singh—The Englishman in India—His Qualities—The One Man Present—*Swaraj*—An Exhibition—The Deputy-Commissioner to the Rescue—When India is Ready for Self-Government

THAT there is an Indian problem is perhaps due to allowing one hand of the clock to run on a little faster than it proportionately should. There are upwards of 300,000,000 people in India, and probably 298,000,000 of those are best and most suitably governed on the paternal system.

The paternal system consists of one clean-bred, perfectly honest and unbribable Englishman, standing under a tree and, according to his lights, without law or legal procedure, deciding cases on common-sense lines, and to the best of his ability. That is the system which suits those vast millions of the majority. It still obtains in country regions where the Deputy-Commissioner can still find time to travel amongst his people. Single-handed honest justice is at the villagers' doors, and the verdict, whatever it may be, is accepted at once and unanimously; such a thing as an appeal is unknown.

In the development of this patriarchal system came centres for the trial of cases, law courts,



lawyers, and a multiplication of laws. The Indian generically is not a litigious person, but once he takes to drink at the legal fountain he becomes a confirmed drunkard. He faces resignedly all the bribery and corruption that bars his way to justice, and becomes a confirmed litigant. He will ruin himself over appeals and counter-appeals, in a case that his Deputy-Commissioner, under the purely patriarchal system, would have settled in half an hour, and at no cost whatever.

With law and law courts came lawyers, Europeans out to make money and charging big fees. Indians, often of the lowest class, out to bleed their brethren, and wax fat on the proceeds.

Law is an excellent thing and every land must have it. But the law and procedure which suits England does not necessarily suit India.

That is one example of one hand of the clock going faster than it should. Possibly fifty or a hundred years hence India may have arrived at the stage when undiluted English law will be suitable to it.

The successful Indian lawyers make modest fortunes. The unsuccessful are at the root of what is called sometimes the unrest in India. They are the disturbing element, and assuming the rôle of the representative voice of India, sometimes write and preach rank treason. They represent nobody but themselves, and a few thousand similar malcontents, and have no mandate whatever from the millions of their faithful fellow-subjects.

It is difficult to get at these poisonous polluters of the political atmosphere through the ordinary agency of the law. They are lawyers themselves, and possibly know more about law and its possibilities than the Public Prosecutor. They can appeal and re-appeal, and go on appealing, and meanwhile can rope in strings of paid and perjured witnesses.

Outside an ordinary Court of Justice in India may be found dozens of professional Indian witnesses, who will swear anything for one rupee. But on the North-West Frontier of India there is a special code, called, I believe, the Frontier Crimes Act, and applicable only to trans-Indus territory, under which straight and swift justice can be done. If that code were applied, when and where necessary, we should hear little more of political crimes, and organised conspiracies.

The Indian requires straight, firm, paternal government, and the less the entanglements of the law enter into it the better. I speak only as a soldier, but after nearly forty years' experience of India, and of my Indian fellow-subjects.

The Indian has many great and lovable qualities which I am the last to depreciate, and here are some instances of them.

Very many years ago, an old Native Officer named Ibrahim Khan served under my father in the Mutiny, and many old wars on the Indian Frontier. When I joined The Guides he was living close by, the Khan of the village, a great local magnate and landowner. He declared that my father was both his father and his mother, and the founder of all his prosperity, and he sent me a pony as a small token of gratitude to my forefathers. This pony, on the Colonel's advice, I accepted, and he carried me many a weary mile in Afghanistan. Old Ibrahim Khan lived for many years afterwards, came to see me frequently, and took a fatherly interest in my progress.

One day, however, came the news of the death of my father in England at the age of eighty-five. A letter also reached old Ibrahim Khan by the same mail giving him the same sad news.

The old man came to me with tears in his eyes, and asked whether this dreadful news was indeed true. I said it was, but bade the old man bear up, for my



IBRAHIM KHAN



father had lived a long and honourable life in the service of his Queen and country, and had been gathered peacefully to his fathers whilst still hale and hearty.

But old Ibrahim Khan was inconsolable.

"Alas! and bitter alas!" he moaned, "my dear old master dead, one with whom I served so long. Who am I that I should live when my Sahib is taken?"

At last he went away bowed with grief, and ten years older than when he entered the house.

Walking gently and feebly along he went straight to the mosque, the temple of his faith, and laying the fatal letter on the ground before him, he knelt down and bowed his head till his forehead lay on the letter. Then he prayed.

"O Allah! O God! Who am I that I should remain on this earth when my dear Sahib is gone? Take me also, O God, that I may be with my old master in Heaven."

And Allah was good to him, and took the old man.

He never ate or drank or spoke again. He just passed peacefully away, with a kind old smile on his face, and his dear master waiting to welcome him Beyond.

Some people say that the old class of servant has died out. You hear the same in England, or Hong Kong, or India. But not perhaps so altogether. It is the personal element, the human sympathy that comes in. One man, or one woman, can always keep their servants, others cannot.

In India perhaps the personal element comes in stronger than in most parts of the world.

The Indian soldier holds a sort of distant allegiance to the King, as to a great and far-off God. He has a slightly more present feeling of allegiance to the Indian Government, the Sirkar, as he calls it. But his real personal devotion, and we may almost say



loyalty, is to his own Sahib, his own British Officer. The Colonel of his regiment is his real deity, occasionally slightly overshadowed by the larger constellation of the General, when he is inspecting the regiment. Not that he really thinks very much of the General, but he knows his Colonel does, and therefore he must too. His squadron or company-commander figures in his eyes as being of the same calibre as his Colonel—just a Colonel in embryo.

For these two, especially if they are his own old Sahibs, who have always been in the regiment, he will go through fire and water, and hell and chaos beyond.

There is strength and weakness in this great and noble feeling. Strength as long as the Sahib lives to lead him, but when that swift bullet lays the Sahib low, he is often as sheep without a shepherd.

When I was starting off for the Great War, my old bearer, Luckoo, who had been with me for twenty-four years, suddenly broke down as he was packing my kit. He bowed down to the ground, and embraced my feet, and wept bitter tears.

"Sahib! What can I do? How can I live without my Sahib? Take me with you."

"I am awfully sorry, Luckoo, I can't possibly. I am only allowed one servant, and he must be a Mohammedan to be able to cook my food. So I must take Kadir Dad."

Luckoo was a Hindu of high caste, who may not cook food even for the Sahib. Nor may he even hand it to him; though I have known Luckoo commit the most dreadful crimes in that way, when I or my wife have been ill.

"But look here, Luckoo, you've served me jolly well for twenty-four years, and I'll get you a good place with another big Sahib. Why, you are only a young man yet: not more than forty-two."

"No, Sahib, I will never serve any other Sahib

but your Honour. Have I not eaten your Honour's salt for twenty-four years ? ”

“ Oh, rot, Luckoo ! I'll get you a good place. And how about Bugtoo, your son ? I must get him a place too.”

Bugtoo appeared first on our horizon as a tiny little boy with a very large tummy, and nothing on but a string round his waist, running about the sunny compound. One day it occurred to me to enquire who this child was. So I pointed him out to Luckoo and said, “ Is that your boy, Luckoo ? ” Luckoo cocked one eye at him, and after gazing steadfastly at the distant figure, remarked laconically and non-committedly, “ God knows ! ”

Bugtoo was shortly after put into a very nice livery by his mistress, with a very large puggri ; and thus clad, with great pomp and ceremony received visitors when they called at the front door. He was now a young man, and assistant-bearer to his father.

“ No, Sahib,” said Luckoo, “ with great respect to your Honour, Bugtoo will take service with no one now. But when the Baby Sahib (as he still calls my son, now a strapping young Subaltern in the 11th Hussars) comes to India, then Bugtoo will serve him. But no one else.”

And so these two faithful souls went off to their village in Kangra, and are there awaiting the arrival of the Baby Sahib on his Indian tour of soldiering.

The best Indians in the middle and lower classes, and those who have the highest and best qualities, are the soldiers and servants who can perhaps neither read nor write, but who have lived all their lives within the honest atmosphere of Englishmen and Englishwomen. The worst are the so-called highly educated Indians, who get a smattering of algebra and John Stuart Mill.

This book is not about the Great War, but perhaps

two stories may be told about Kadir Dad, another old Indian servant who followed me to it.

It was a dark and bitterly cold night. A driving icy wind and pouring rain. The ground soaking wet, and the water standing in pools on it. Heavy firing going on at intervals, and to move a precarious business.

We had been fighting all day, and were fighting all night, and had another fight before us next day. Somehow, too, our food had gone wrong, and we had had nothing to eat or drink since the early morning before.

We were passing the hours in utter misery. Frozen with cold, soaked to the skin, hungry and thirsty, and no smoking possible.

Suddenly, at about 11.30 p.m., in the dense darkness a figure was seen groping along.

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"Kadir Dad, the General Sahib's servant. Is he here?"

And there was old Kadir Dad, with a bottle of whisky, a bottle of water, a tumbler, some biscuits, and my deck-chair!

For nearly two miles he had stumbled across the entirely trackless plain, in pitch darkness, without tree, or wall, or bush for landmark; through shell fire and many swishing bullets, and after many hours had found us.

I think we all blessed old Kadir Dad that night, and thanked the good God who guided him safely.

As our midday meal was being prepared one day a shell fell into the kitchen and exploded, causing considerable devastation amidst the pots and pans, and wounding my Orderly. The cook was not a very brave fellow, named John, originally a native of India, but long settled in Baghdad, where he had married a Chaldean woman. The Chaldean lady was in Baghdad, and John joined up with us as cook,

with a view to rejoining her. The shell not only upset the kitchen, but upset John a great deal, too. He burst into loud lamentations, and wrung his hands and wept copious tears. He would have run away, only he thought it was rather more dangerous in the open behind than in the little dug-out where his kitchen was.

Then came old Kadir Dad, as the angel of peace and consolation. He himself was not in the least perturbed; and first picking up the fuze-head of the shell to be preserved as a relic, he squatted down beside the weeping John.

"Yes, Jārṇ" (as he pronounced it), "you are a very brave fellow, Jārṇ. But how about the Sahib's food?"

"Yes, Jārṇ," stroking him down the back, "you are a great warrior. Now just put the fire together again and blow it up. Thus.

"Yes, Jārṇ, fear not. You will be able to talk about this a lot afterwards, and tell them how brave you are. Now the frying-pan and some bacon.

"Yes, Jārṇ, your wife will say you are like a lion, so brave. A few more sticks on the fire, Jārṇ."

More stroking and encouragement, and the weeping ceased. John felt like a desperately brave fellow, and finished frying the bacon in quite a cheerful and optimistic mood.

In governing India, the more the personal element comes in the better, personal contact of the Englishman with the governed, from the Viceroy downwards.

Lord Mayo was a tremendous personality amongst the natives of India. He was a great burly man of commanding presence, free with his money, and riding about amongst the people.

One day, in the course of a ride round the North-West Frontier, he arrived with a couple of his Staff to stay the night at The Guides' Mess.

Regimental troop horses had been sent out to stage him in. These were small light horses, and Lord Mayo was a large heavy man and rode hard. Anyway, when he got in he thought he had about foundered his mount, and did not want anyone to be the loser.

"Capital little horse that of yours, Colonel. Carried me like a bird. I should like to buy him. What would be a fair price?"

"He belongs to Sowar Ram Sing, and I suppose is worth about Rs.250." For each trooper in the old Silladar Cavalry owned his own horse.

"Well, he is a good bit of stuff." And turning to his Military Secretary: "Give Ram Sing Rs.500 for his horse."

Here indeed is a king! thought Ram Sing and the rest of the regiment.

Next morning, as he was going off, he turned to his Military Secretary, and said:

"I am afraid we have given these people a lot of trouble. Give the Mess servants Rs.500 backshish."

As there were only three mess servants to divide this princely sum, they too decided that Lord Mayo was a king, and spread his fame far and wide.

One of the highest and best class of Indians is Sir Pertab Singh. He is a gentleman to the fingertips, and reminds one most of a very gallant knight of the days of chivalry. If the princes and leaders of India were all modelled on the type of Sir Pertab Singh, the British might to-morrow lay down the burden of government, and with confidence leave India to govern herself.

To get on with the native you have to understand him, and that understanding is the result of intimate knowledge of his prides and his prejudices, which only comes with long residence in the country and daily intercourse. Travellers and new-comers often consider Englishmen in India unsympathetic,



even hard and arrogant. That is only a superficial view, the Englishman is really the kindest person in the world, but he has learnt almost insensibly, by years of contact with the people of India, that, however sympathetic he may be, he must be careful how and when he shows it. He is born of a nation accustomed for hundreds of years to govern alien nations all over the world, and as the history of the Empire shows, on the whole with humanity and success. There is perhaps no nation on earth which has come under British rule and guidance which has not benefited by it. The attitude of the Englishman in India is that of one man, and alone, governing thousands of his fellow subjects, not by force, but by strength of character and moral rectitude.

To take a daily instance, an observer may be standing on a crowded railway platform where there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Indians — a struggling, shouting, and seething mass. Appears one Englishman walking quietly to his carriage; he neither pushes, nor shoves, nor shouts, but it is at once apparent that he is the one man on the platform. Through those hundreds of years he has insensibly acquired the natural demeanour of one who rules, an attribute which lies dormant when he is a plain citizen in England, but at once develops when great responsibilities fall on him.

It is perhaps not generally known that there are only 1200 Englishmen in the Indian Civil Service, and that these govern more than 300,000,000 of the King's subjects. In a German Colony there are, as a rule, 30 per cent. who are officials. At that rate the Germans would require several millions of officials to govern India.

The Indian National Congress from time to time puts forth suggestions, or demands, for a larger share of the government of the country to be entrusted to Indians. The extreme sections demand

Home Rule and the abrogation of British control. But is the Indian nation ready for this? Let us take two everyday instances.

As far back as Lord Ripon's time, to meet the aspirations of the more forward spirits, a measure of Local Self-Government was introduced, "Lokul Sluff" the natives call it. Under this measure Boards were created for dealing with local affairs, municipal and the like. After many years' trial this measure has been found almost a total failure. The Indian cannot govern himself, even in small local affairs. With the very usual result that in most places the Board or Committee does practically nothing, and the whole work and control falls on the shoulders of the only Englishman on it, the Deputy or Assistant-Commissioner.

A few years ago, when *Swaraj*—that is, the encouragement of home Indian industries—was to the fore, some of the leading Indians of a large city in Upper India conceived the very good idea of having an exhibition of home industries, so as to encourage their growth. The British Government heartily supported the scheme, and it was decided that an Indian Committee should manage the whole business from start to finish. This was all settled a year before the proposed opening of the Exhibition. As week followed week, and month followed month, and no signs of preparation were apparent, the head English official of the city, the Deputy-Commissioner, made discreet enquiries, and was assured that all was well.

As time went on the Deputy-Commissioner used occasionally to take his morning ride past the Exhibition ground, to see what progress was being made. There was a little scaffolding up, and here and there usually a few coolies working in a desultory manner.

Six weeks before the date fixed for the opening of

the Exhibition, the Indian Committee came to the Deputy-Commissioner with tears in their eyes, and implored him to help them. They could get nothing done, and failure stared them in the face.

The Deputy-Commissioner, like the kind man he was, took off his coat, and in addition to his own heavy duties, set to work to help them. He took over the whole job, and in six weeks accomplished what the Indian Committee had failed to do in a year, and made of the Exhibition a success.

An Indian Judge told this story in the writer's hearing, and he added :

“And those are the people who think they are fit to govern themselves.”

When India is ripe for self-government, then, in accordance with her precedents and history, England will gladly lay down the burden of government and launch another enlightened nation to sail the seas alone.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ODDS AND ENDS, MOSTLY INDIAN

My Father's Ride—700 Miles in Seven Days—The June Heat—Sukker to Simla—"An Awful Beast"—The Adjutant-General's Remarks—Lord Lytton's Remark—The Irishman of India—Some Sample Letters—Catching a Train—"Your Honour Knows Best"—The Horns of a Dilemma—The Camp of Roaring Luck—The Old Soldier—"Draw Swords"—"Charge"—The Queen's Bounty—Sir James Willcocks and the Tactful Sentry—A Regimental Durbar—The Infuriated Gurkha—Deprived of his Rope to Heaven—The Judgment—Mr. Keir Hardie in India—Calls Himself a Coolie—Astonishment of Audience—The Wano Patriots—Invitation Accepted—Arranging his Reception—Battles by the Way—A Feast at Mess—A Disappointment—Micky Doyne—Full Private in the K.O.S.B.—Sir Bindon Blood Admires the View—Storming of the Malakand—The Return Journey—A Surprise Visit—A Curious Medallion

MY father<sup>1</sup> was a very hard man, and a noted rider. His nickname was "Plummy." One of his great feats of endurance was a ride from Sukker to Simla, a distance of seven hundred miles in seven days, in the month of June, that is in the hottest period of the year, through the hottest region in India. I asked him once how he managed about horses for the ride. He answered laconically :

"Oh ! *dâk-ed* them out."

In those days on the Frontier wheeled traffic was unknown and everybody rode, wherever business, pleasure, or duty called him. If the distance was long, horses were laid out by stages of from eight to ten miles each, sometimes more. A Cavalry regiment, out of courtesy to a brother Officer, would lay out

<sup>1</sup> Major-General J. W. Younghusband, c.s.i.

horses for several stages both sides of its cantonment to help him along. The regular charge for these troop horses, which went to the sowar who owned the horse, was Rs.2 per stage. Therefore anywhere near a Cavalry Cantonment my father was all right, but in his seven hundred mile ride he had to pass through big stretches of country where there were no cantonments. Through these districts he arranged with the Civil Authorities to provide Police patrol horses which were laid out in stages for him. Occasionally, however, there were long stretches to be passed through where there were not even Police patrol horses. Here he had to pick up what he could ; the village headman's pony, a scarecrow out of an *ekka*, anything on four legs.

One of his mounts was lent him by Sir Sam Browne, then a subaltern. This was an "awful brute," as my father described it. He would neither walk, nor trot, and his canter was an earthquake. His only decent pace was at a full gallop. So my father just put him at that for the ten or twelve miles of his stage, which ended at Sir Sam Browne's house. It was a very hot evening, and he thought he must have about done for his host's horse. So on entering the house, like Lord Mayo on another occasion, he at once said :

"A rattling good horse that of yours, Sam. You must sell him to me. What do you want for him ? "

"Sell that horse ! Not I, Plummy, my boy. He's the best horse I ever had. Wouldn't sell him for worlds ! "

Arrived at Simla, my father went to report his arrival, as in duty bound, to the Adjutant-General.

"How do you do, Younghusband ? How are you ? Where do you come from ? "

"Sukker, sir."

"Sukker ! Where the hell is Sukker ? "



"It is in Scinde, sir."

"Scinde! That's a long way off."

"Yes, sir, seven hundred miles."

"Seven hundred miles! And how much leave have you got?"

"Ten days, sir."

"Ten days! And how the doose did you get here in ten days?"

"I rode, sir, in seven days."

"Seven days, did you? And how the blazes are you going to get back in three?"

"Well, sir, I was rather hoping you would kindly extend my leave a little."

The Adjutant-General, who was a kind man, burst out laughing, and said:

"Yes, by Jove, you must want a bit of rest. You can have your month's leave."

So my father had his leave and then jogged back his seven hundred miles.

The object of this tremendous ride was a young lady—my mother.

Lord Lytton made a wonderfully true remark when he called the Babu the Irishman of India. Neither the Babu nor the Irishman have the least notion that they are being funny, and nothing is further from their thoughts. In each case it is entirely spontaneous and natural, but the mental projector is entirely dissimilar, one is Eastern and the other Western. The Irishman's chief manner of amusing the Englishman is to do so verbally, the Babu usually achieves the same effect on paper, or by telegram. Nearly all Indian soldiers, and the vast majority of the Indian peasantry, are unacquainted with English, and therefore confide their correspondence to professional letter-writers, in a regiment, usually the Babu in the regimental office, and in villages the village postmaster. Here are two or three samples recently received:

10th April, 1915.

DEAR MADAM,

Received your kind letter together with two parcels—watch and the cloth. I thank you very much for the kind favour. The photo sent shall be a memory of the Bawa Sahib.<sup>1</sup> Please convey my hearty salam to my beloved Sahib, and I always pray God to prosper and lengthen the life of the General. My salam to Bawa Sahib, may God bless him. Please be good enough as to send my few lines to the Sahib in the field, and always be punctual to let me know about the welfare of the Sahib. Bugtoo (his son) pays his best respects to the Sahib and to you. Please take the trouble of sending me a knife, a fine cloth for four shirts and a blue cloth for the coat, etc. I am a poor man, please shower your manna occasionally.

Thanking you in anticipation.

With best respects,

Yours most obedient servant,

LAKHOO, Bahra (Bearer).<sup>2</sup>

To the General Sahib Behadur.

SIR,

I most humbly and respectfully invite your kind consideration with the few following lines.

My husband has been died or rather gallowed<sup>3</sup> in Egypt from the last 2 months. There was none to support me except him, whose name was —.

Now a days I am without support and in much difficulties. I have no lands to give or produce me any kind of bread.

<sup>1</sup> Baby Sahib, now twenty years old and a Lieutenant in the 11th Hussars, but always a Baby to his old Bearer.

<sup>2</sup> Was my servant for twenty-four years.

<sup>3</sup> He was hanged for murdering a British Officer.

At this time you are the only man to support me.

I have not even a building to live in. So I beg you to give me any kind of support so that I may be able to pass my life without hesitation. Now a day my age is twelve years and I have nothing for my subsistence. There is a custom in our country that a woman can not go outside the home. At this time you are the man to support me.

Hoping to hear in favourable regard towards me,

Your most obedient servant,

\* \* \* \*

27-1-1916.

DEAR SIR,

Since long I was much astonished to know where you went after leaving Aden, but thanks God that my astonishment changed into joy when I read in news papers that your special ability and old experience in military tact has won a great name for you near Bagdad in Arak Arb. To tell the truth, able officers like you will surely root out the enemies who know nothing save cruelty. Our blockade and enemies limited number of population lead them (enemies) to complete destruction. I have heard but could not clearly read the words of title recently given to you by Our King Empror, for which I congratulate you. I pray for your long life, health, high ranks and for the final success of Allies which is near at hand. Everything is going on quite well in India.

Yours obediently,

\* \* \* \*

There are evidently some very clever people in the Post Office, the War Office, and the India Office, and they were all present at their desks on January

19th, 1917. A letter was written to me from India by an old servant, and it was thus addressed :

London

Bare Kalaf ghar

Pohanch Kar

Janral Yung Husban

Sahab Ko Mile.

Which being interpreted is :

London

Having arrived at the great Club.

To General Younghusband Sahib  
may it be delivered.

That letter arrived in London on January 19th and was marked "War Office" in blue pencil by the Post Office. The War Office strategist scratched that out and wrote "India Office" in red ink. The India Office lightning operator scratched that out, put my Town address, not a club, in black ink, and popped it into the post. It was delivered to me first post on January 20th !

But the Babu sometimes displays uncommon humour in ordinary life. One day I was in a tremendous hurry to catch a train, and not being sure that my watch was right, dashed into the Post Office where the official time is kept, and asked the Babu what was the correct time.

Smiling fatly and insinuatingly, he replied with the true Oriental flavour :

"Your Honour knows best!"

Which besides being untrue did not help me at all.

Another Babu was caught on the horns of a frightful dilemma. Sir Edmund Barrow and I strolled into the Post Office, where my regiment

was stationed, about some letters. The Babu had lately been transferred from Peshawar, which was Sir Edmund's headquarters, to our little place.

"Well, Babu," said I, "how do you like Mardan? Happy and contented here?"

"Yes, Sahib, greatly happy. Out of Heaven, this is the best place."

"Hullo! Babu," broke in Sir Edmund, "but what about Peshawar?"

"Oh! sir," perspired the Babu in great perplexity, "that also is out of Heaven. Indeed, sir" (with a deprecating smile), "I am a lucky man to be alive anywhere, so great is your Honour's kindness."

We were being inspected by Sir George Luck, then Inspector-General of Cavalry, in the days when the first great Cavalry manœuvres were held. The Camp of Roaring Luck it was called. And by way of beginning at the bottom and instructing everyone in his duties, Sir George Luck used to have up the Indian Officers and ask them various questions to test their knowledge of the drill book. In The Guides in those days were many stout old warriors who could neither read nor write, but who, having been in constant fights from their youth upwards, knew exactly what to do in a battle, and did it. To these, drill-books, writing and learning of all descriptions were anathema. Only postal clerks, and office Babus, and such-like inferior cattle pursued such peaceful arts as reading, and writing, and learning things.

One old warrior with thirty years' service, many a wound, and a hard-earned medal or two, received such enquiries as were made to him by the General with the politest attention. To some he answered not, shaking his head wisely and tolerantly, as if humouring an inquisitive child. To any questions pressed upon him he would reply with engaging candour;



"Now what answer would your Honour give? Your Honour knows everything. Who am I that I should instruct your Honour?"

At last Sir George Luck got rather nettled, and asked :

"Well, what do you know?"

"Sahib, in my days there were only two Orders. One was 'Draw swords,' and the other was 'Charge.' I know these well."

An Indian paper once rose to the commendable height of humour displayed in the following paragraph. Yet one cannot be quite sure whether the writer had the least intention of being humorous :

"The Queen's Bounty is not infrequently bestowed on women who present the British nation with triplets, but we believe it is rarely bestowed on men. An exception will doubtless be made in the case of Lieut.-Col. G. J. Younghusband, who has not only given birth to, but raised, three regiments, the 3rd Imperial Yeomanry, the 26th (Younghusband's Horse) Imperial Yeomanry, and the 27th Light Cavalry."

The Indian is at all costs, even occasionally at the expense of truth, tactful.

One day Sir James Willcocks was inspecting a regiment belonging to our Brigade, and the hour assigned was 10 a.m. At that hour the regiment was drawn up to a hair's-breadth, and ready to receive the inspecting General. But as minute after minute passed and no General appeared, it was thought that some accident must have occurred, for Sir James was a most punctual man.

At length, at twenty minutes past ten, the General and his staff appeared pricking at haste across the plain, and exactly as they arrived at the saluting base the sonorous voice of the guard-room gong sounded ten.

"A most tactful sentry that," remarked Sir

James. "I am really twenty minutes late, kept by urgent business. Very sorry."

What made this tactful proceeding possible is that outside all Indian guard-rooms the gong is struck by hand.

The daily orderly-room in an Indian regiment is called a *darbar*, and is in some regiments held in the open, under a big tree in patriarchal fashion, or on the edge of a veranda. At this *darbar* all are entitled to attend, whether they have business or not; it is an open Court. Many curious cases quite outside Military Law and jurisdiction come before the Commanding Officer at these *darbars*: domestic, social, and religious. It was in this last connection that an infuriated Gurkha one day stood forth. He was perfectly livid with rage and looked like blood, so I noticed one or two hefty and ready fellows close up to him to prevent mischief.

A Gurkha, as one of his tribal customs, as well as from religious observance, cuts his hair quite short all over and has a parting shaved down the middle, but leaves on the top of his scalp one long lock of hair. This lock of hair is very carefully preserved for a specific reason.

Apparently the Gurkha and another soldier, who was a Pathan, had a quarrel, and so vigorous did this become that the Gurkha's cap got knocked off. This revealed the little lock of hair on top of his head, and the Pathan, who by nature was a bit of a yahoo, in the course of the further conflict, seized this, and being a man of some strength, pulled it out bodily.

Friends then intervened, and the Gurkha was led off, mad with rage and pain, to make his complaint before the Colonel in open *darbar*. This complaint and its preface put into plain language appeared to be that not only was the Pathan a pig, and the son of a pig, but that his mother was a lady of easy virtue, who had ended her life at the stake. Regard-

ing the Pathan's sister he had not a good word to say; indeed, according to the Gurkha the whole of his female relations were such as would make any respectable person blush. This was all by way of an opening address, and bore no necessary connection with the truth, or with the subject-matter of the complaint. The real complaint, when we got to it, was this :

"As your Honour knows, we Gurkhas grow a tuft of hair on our heads, in accordance with the orders of our religion. We lose caste, and are heavily fined if we cut it off, and for this reason. When the agents of the Deity come to take us to Heaven it is by that lock, and that lock alone, will he lift us up, for then he can take several at the same time. Now that accursed Mohammedan, out of religious spite, has torn off mine; observe thou, who alone art my Father and my Mother and Protector of the Poor, here it is in my hand."

And he produced it, and flourished it aloft.

"That's very unfortunate," said the Colonel, "very unfortunate indeed. But look here, Dan Bir, you must not think of leaving us yet awhile. You must just stop in the regiment, and put off going to Heaven, till you have grown another lock of hair. Be content. Be no more angry."

Then, turning sternly to the Pathan, he said :

"And you, Shah Jehan, shall pay the fine which is due from Dan Bir to his spiritual leader, for having lost his lock. And any more horseplay of that class, and out of this regiment you go. *Ek dum*, like a shot. You understand."

"I am content," said the Gurkha.

"As your Honour orders," said the Pathan.

And both saluted and went.

Mr. Keir Hardie not many years ago undertook a tour of India, with the modest intention apparently of showing the natives that they were a

downtrodden race. He could not speak one word of the language, and therefore every remark he made, and every speech he uttered, had to be translated by interpreters. These were supplied by the small and insignificant body of disappointed lawyers, hailing mostly from Lower Bengal, who assumed to speak on behalf of 300,000,000 fellow subjects. It was rather unfortunate that Mr. Keir Hardie's last speech did not happen to be his first. For though his visit was, to put it mildly, a frost from beginning to end, he would in that case have had no audience at all.

In this last speech, just before he sailed homeward, he brought out the time-honoured tag that he was "a labouring man," as if nobody laboured except those who build brick walls, or lay railway sleepers. Most unfortunately, the interpreter on the spur of the moment translated the word "labouring man" into "coolie." The audience, which consisted of anything but coolies, grew suddenly cold at this astonishing revelation. A member of Parliament a coolie, impossible! They must have mistaken the speaker's meaning. But when the orator not only went on, through his interpreter calling himself a coolie, but added that he was a coolie speaking to coolies, several highly respectable persons found that they had urgent business elsewhere.

Next day it appeared in all the papers that Mr. Keir Hardie, though he called himself a Member of Parliament, was really only a coolie, as he had been careful to explain. And who on earth cared one way or another what a coolie thought, or said?

That gives the Indian attitude of mind in a concrete form. No respectable Indian audience would for one moment consent to be addressed by a sweeper, the lowest caste of all. Nor on any grounds whatever, political or social, would it submit to



hearing the views of a coolie, who is only just one rung above a sweeper. The professional agitators are usually of the petty clerk class, whose parents have been well enough off to send their sons to England to be called to the Bar. These return in English clothes, and with a fine flow of words, and poison their compatriots with ill-digested theories about self-government, the rights of nations, and the like.

During Mr. Keir Hardie's Indian tour it occurred to some bored subalterns in a Frontier Mess that they might get a little amusement for themselves, and at the same time considerably enliven Mr. Keir Hardie's tour. They were stationed at Wano, which lies some one hundred and twenty miles from the nearest railway station on the North-West Frontier. The first sixty of these miles can be driven in a tonga, but the last sixty miles lie up the rock-strewn bed of the Gomal Pass, and have to be ridden.

No man can go up that Pass even with an escort. He can only go up on stated days twice a week, and then only with the heights on both sides held by Infantry picquets. This is because the Gomal Pass runs through the Mahsud Waziri country, inhabited by fourteen thousand armed and determined raiders. There was not the least chance that Mr. Keir Hardie would receive even the most enticing and courteous invitation from one of His Majesty's Messes; that was not his rôle. Though curiously enough, if he had known it, it would have greatly enhanced his prestige amongst Indians to be asked to an Officers' Mess. For the warrior Sahib is a great personage in Indian eyes.

The bright geniuses of the Officers' Mess therefore sank their identity under the more engaging bait of the "Wano Patriots." A telegram was consequently forwarded to Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P., from the Wano Patriots, expressing unbounded admiration for him



and his propaganda, and asking him to pay a visit, and deliver a lecture to the down-trodden patriots of Wano.

In due course a reply was received from Mr. Keir Hardie, sympathising with the down-trodden condition of the patriots, and promising to pay them an early visit. These telegrams can be seen in the album at the Wano Mess.

So far so good, and, further, the patriots determined that Mr. Keir Hardie should have the time of his life. First they arranged that the distinguished M.P. should have as comfortable a pony as possible, for perchance he had never been on a horse in his life, and sixty miles is a hard ride even for a tough rider. They did not want him to arrive peevish. But they did want him to arrive in a chastened spirit.

It was therefore arranged that though the Pass should be even more securely picqueted than usual, a tremendous battle was to take place.

If the Mahsud-Waziris furnished the desired enemy, well and good; but if it was one of their quiet days, and none were on the war-path, then other arrangements were to be made.

The picquets were, in this latter unlikely contingency, carefully instructed to enter into a heavy engagement at each spot as the cavalcade came in sight, and lots of shots were to pass at a discreet distance over the honoured M.P.'s head. To the unaccustomed, or even the accustomed, a bullet passing within fifty yards seems to whistle past one's ears.

On arrival at the Mess it was proposed to give Mr. Keir Hardie the best dinner, and the most hospitable time of his life. Thus deftly educating him up to the understanding that all Officers are not popinjays who live chiefly in or about ladies' boudoirs, and sleep on feather beds. But that some of them,

at any rate, live year in and year out with their lives in their hands, holding the outposts of our Empire, and at the end of the day can dine as usual.

It was a source of keen disappointment to the patriots at the last moment to receive a telegram to say that Mr. Keir Hardie regretted that he could not fulfil his engagement with the Wano Patriots.

It was a pity indeed, for it would undoubtedly have enlarged his views greatly on the subject of labour, not necessarily making bricks and mortar, but for the Empire.

. . . . .

It was on the day before we stormed the Malakand Pass on the way to the Relief of Chitral, that Sir Robert Low and his Staff were riding forward slowly past the long line of troops marching up the road. As we came alongside the King's Own Scottish Borderers, Sir Bindon Blood, the Chief of the Staff, turned to me, and said :

"Now isn't that a particularly fine piece of colouring?" pointing away from the troops. "The lights and shades on that mountain are particularly fine. The way the greys blend into the blues——" and so on for quite a long time.

If Sir Bindon had not been a particularly abstemious man, one would have suspected something stronger than tea for breakfast. However, as in duty bound, I answered, "Yes, sir," and "No, sir," and "Quite so, sir," but secretly thought that his mind had become temporarily unhinged.

Suddenly he stopped his high-flown poetic and artistic comments on the border mountains, and, turning to me with a grin, remarked :

"I was only keeping your attention and mine off the K.O.S.B.'s."

"Why so, sir?"

"Well, just because I was afraid you or I might recognise a friend in the ranks."

Then he gave a merry wink, and rode on to talk to Sir Robert Low.

Later in the day, happening to meet an Officer of the K.O.S.B.'s, I asked him straight, what friend of mine was in the ranks of his regiment.

"Don't you know?" he replied.

"No, I don't."

"Then," viewing the red tabs with suspicion, "wait till you find out." And he smiled mysteriously, and found a job elsewhere to do.

It was only next day, during the battle, that I heard accidentally that Micky Doyne, Colonel of the 4th Dragoon Guards, was fighting disguised as a private soldier in the ranks of the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

He was a gallant Irishman, was Micky Doyne, but in all his soldiering had never seen a shot fired, and he was determined to do so. Stationed at Rawal Pindi, not far distant, he got a few days' leave for shooting, quite appropriately. But how or by what subterfuges, history does not relate, got taken on as a private in the K.O.S.B.'s. He fought through the action with great gallantry, and was one of the foremost in carrying the Malakand Pass with the bayonet.

That night his leave was up, and through the same kind agency, managed to slip away on his trudge back forty miles to the railway.

About midnight, Raleigh Egerton,<sup>1</sup> of The Guides, was awakened by someone fumbling at his tent door. Seizing his revolver he asked sharply:

"Who's there?"

"Want to speak to you a minute," answered a tired voice, in English.

Opening the tent door, Raleigh Egerton saw

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Sir Raleigh Egerton, K.C.B.

revealed an exceeding begrimed and unkempt private of the K.O.S.B.'s.

"Give us a drink and a biscuit," said the tired private.

Thinking that he had already had too much whisky to be thus knocking up an Officer at midnight, Raleigh Egerton was about to order him off with great sternness, when he added :

"I'm Doyne of the 4th D.G.'s."

This rather confirmed the Officer in his opinion. The man was not only drunk, but so drunk as to try and pass himself off as the Colonel of a Cavalry regiment.

Explanations, however, ensued, and the adventure was told. So with a good meal and a short rest, Micky Doyne was sped on his way.

. . . . .

One of the old Standing Orders in Fort Abazai, one of the Frontier forts, reads :

"The custom obtaining amongst Officers of shooting at natives across the river is reprehensible, and should be discontinued."

This order was issued in the days when rifles were first invented, and owned only by a few Officers as a sort of new toy. In the boredom of garrisoning an isolated fort, young Officers apparently used to sit on top of the Keep in the evening and practise shooting, usually taking as a target something as large as a haystack at three hundred yards distance. Occasionally, however, without for a moment thinking that a bullet would carry so far, or that there was the remotest chance of hitting so small a thing as a man, they used to take a shot across the river. Much as a boy would take a chance shot with a catapult at a bird at an impossible distance.

Apparently some of these shots went uncommonly

near some villagers, who naturally complained. Hence the order.

. . . . .

For many years attached to my person has been a gold medallion. On one side is engraved :

KEEP YOUR TEMPER  
TILL 10 A.M.

And on the other :

AND YOU'LL KEEP IT  
ALL DAY.

The possession of this medallion was well known in my Brigade, and a candid and confiding subaltern once told me that a pious hope went round, when field days, manœuvres, and other obnoxious forms of exercise were in progress, that it had not accidentally been left at home.

Perhaps they may be issued to all Field Officers, Colonels, and Generals, The A.I.S. or Anti-Irascible Society.



## CHAPTER XIX

### MESS CUSTOMS

The King's Health—Across the Water—Some Regiments Absolved—Undoubted Loyalty of Old—Various Customs in Drinking the King's Health—"Gentlemen, the Vice"—The Regent's Allowance—A Backhander—A Naval Tradition—"A Glass of Wine with You"—Treating in Messes—Mufti at Dinner—A Subaltern's Instruction—Ante-room Etiquette—Scotch Regiments and St. Andrew—A "Quaich"—Pipers at Mess—Irish Regiments and St. Patrick—Cricket the Day After—The Lost Wicket-keeper—Welsh Regiments and St. David—Passing the Leek—The Italian Priest—The Senior Officer at Mess—An Angry Doctor—Six Months' Discipline—Life in a Mess—Mess Expenses—How to Live—Young Officers of To-day—An Old Soldier to a Young One—Answering Salutes—The King's Uniform

I HAVE often wondered why no one has written a book on Regimental Customs. Perhaps someone has, and I have missed it. But, anyway, it is evidently not well circulated, or we should not see customs changing and dying out, as we do now sometimes.

Let us begin with the drinking of the King's health at Mess. As probably most people know, the origin of this toast was only very remotely connected with any consuming desire for the well-being of the reigning sovereign. Far from it. It was, on the contrary, a toast ordered by the King to be drunk, as a test of each individual Officer's loyalty to himself and his dynasty. Officers who longed for the return of the Stuarts, and meanwhile were not desirous of losing their commissions, got over the difficulty by passing the wine-glass, before drinking from it, across the water in their finger-bowls. The

toast thus became "The King" (across the water). All that is now, of course, a thing of the far past, and when Officers drink the King's health they do so with the utmost loyalty, and add, "God bless him."

In different regiments different ceremonial is used in drinking the King's health, whilst in some regiments the King's health is not drunk at all. The origin of this omission is that these regiments were in ancient days so undoubtedly loyal to the King, that they were exempted from the test of the toast. There are certain regiments with undoubted history on their side in support, but there are also spurious imitators. The writer remembers one being exposed many years ago. The General, when dining with the regiment, noticed that they did not drink the Sovereign's health. An official inquiry was sent next day asking the reason. In reply was trotted out the old loyalty chestnut. But the General knew a little better, and pointed out that the regiment was not born, or bred, or thought of, till a hundred years later. He ordered that in future they should drink the Sovereign's health once a week, without fail.

In regiments which drink the King's health there are several varieties in method. The most general custom is, after the wine has been passed round, for the President to stand up and say, "Mr. Vice, The King." Mr. Vice then stands up and says, "Gentlemen, The King." Everyone then stands up and the band plays a bar or two of "God Save the King." Led by the Colonel each Officer then vociferates more or less loudly, "The King, God bless him" and sips his wine. This ceremony generally takes place once a week, and is followed by the toast, "The Prince of Wales," in regiments connected with that Prince.

In other regiments the Royal toasts are drunk

sitting, and every night. In the Navy, too, the toast is drunk sitting. The origin in both cases may possibly have been safety against the perils of the sea, or a slippery floor. Some regiments leave out "Mr. Vice" altogether, and the President gives the toast direct. I remember, on one solemn occasion, the President, rising and with great portentality and emphasis, giving the opening "Mr. Vice, The Queen." Mr. Vice, who was busy talking, taken by surprise, jumped to his feet, and briskly gave the toast, "Gentlemen, The Vice—as you were, The Queen."

A somewhat unpopular innovation has been introduced in India, directing Officers to drop the old title that has lived for centuries in the Mess, and to drink to "The King-Emperor." Regiments do not like these changes in ancient regimental customs, and, as a matter of fact, like the finger-bowl Officers, they very often elude such orders, except when a General or someone is present who might take notice.

The President and Vice-President are appointed weekly by roster. The origin of the Regent's allowance is well known, but may perhaps be repeated. George IV, when Regent, was dining at a regimental Mess and he noticed that several Officers did not take part in drinking the King's health. The Regent enquired the reason of this, and was told that the Officers in question, though perfectly loyal, could not afford to drink wine. "Tut! tut! that will never do," said the Regent. "Every regiment shall have two bottles of wine free every night, to drink the King's health, at my expense." And he was as good as his word.

When the writer first joined the Service these two bottles, one of port and one of Madeira, were put on the table every night, free of cost. Nowadays the allowance still continues, but is usually taken in

money, instead of wine, and goes towards general Mess expenses. While on the subject of wine it may be mentioned that wine at Mess, as indeed now in private houses, is passed from right to left round the table, and may on no account go backwards, except with special permission. For instance, if an Officer wants a glass of wine and has inadvertently allowed the decanter to pass, he addresses the President, or Vice, whoever is nearer, and says, "Mr. President, or Mr. Vice, may I have a back-hander?" I do not know the origin of this custom, though some say that it is the result of an ancient superstition that the wine went sour if passed the wrong way. Others say its origin was to ensure that all drank fair. In the Navy the tradition is that the ship will sink within a year, if the wine is passed the wrong way.

In some regiments a loving-cup goes round to celebrate certain occasions, and whilst each Officer is drinking, his next-door neighbour steps out and stands back to back with him, so that he shall not, as of old was apparently possible, be stabbed in the back, whilst his head is buried in the loving-cup.

It is not necessary to drink the King's health in wine. King Edward issued an order that his health might be drunk in water, and this still holds good though seldom literally acted upon; whiskey and soda in a wine-glass being the substitute. In days gone by there were many occasions on which an Officer had to stand drinks all round, either to celebrate a promotion, or as a fine for some violation of regimental rules and regulations. The matter is now entirely voluntary, and an Officer rarely stands drinks round; unless he has won the Derby, or come into a fortune.

There was also an old custom, now quite dead, of drinking a glass of wine with a brother Officer at Mess. The procedure was to call the Mess Sergeant,



or a waiter, and say to him, "Take this bottle to Captain Hallows and ask him to give me the pleasure of drinking a glass of wine with me." Hallows' glass was then filled, and the two nodded genially at each other, and drank their wine.

Rather an insidious, and deadly, and really rather vulgar offshoot of this courteous custom began to get into some messes. That is the habit of Officers standing each other drinks, at any time of the day, in the ante-room ; for all the world as if one of His Majesty's Officers' Messes was a public-house, or American bar. And the vulgarity was emphasised by adding such catchwords as "so long" and "here's to you," which came from the same not very aristocratic haunts.

An Officers' Mess is, of course, each individual Officer's private house, and it is just as much a *faux pas* to offer an Officer a drink in his own Mess, as it would be to offer one's civilian host a whiskey and soda in his own house, and pay his butler a shilling for it. On one occasion I saw a very smart and very correct Colonel of a crack Cavalry regiment nearly burst into bits at being offered a drink in his own Mess, by a young veterinary Lieutenant who was temporarily attached as an honorary member. Of course most Colonels rigidly taboo this innovation, for not only is it against the ancient etiquette of the Service, and also rather vulgar, but it indirectly promotes large mess-bills, which no one wants.

A certain number of regiments in former days used to wear mufti at dinner, and some do still ; amongst these were the Household Cavalry when stationed in London ; and The Guides and regiments of the Punjab Frontier Force in India. The Foot Guards do not have a Mess in London, but take their meals at the Guards' Club.

There is a certain etiquette on joining a regiment which a boy should know. If he has a friend already in



the regiment he should look him up first, and together go and see the Adjutant. The Adjutant will then take the newly joined sub. in hand and will take him round to see the Colonel, and then to the Mess to introduce him to any Officers who may be in. In some regiments a newly joined subaltern has to report himself in uniform to the Colonel at the regimental office, but if things so fit in, the Colonel's acquaintance will have been made unofficially the day before, and a formal arrival report dispensed with. He is also asked to dine with the Mess his first night, as a guest, and sits next the Colonel.

When I joined the 17th Foot, the senior subaltern took me in charge to teach me all things, and incidentally that there was no regiment like our own. That the others, poor things, did their best, but it wasn't much—comparatively! At the same time, never by word, sign, or deed, was one to let this appear, for that would indeed be bad form. These were the little grains of *esprit de corps* which were being sown, and which grow into that great and good tree which leads regiments to win great victories against great odds, century after century.

Another little point in etiquette we were taught which now sometimes appears to have been forgotten: we were told to call a subaltern, or a Captain, by his terminal name *tout court* Jones, De Vere, or Castlerock, and never by any chance Captain Jones or Lieutenant De Vere, or Lord Castlerock; nor, on the other hand, unless he chanced to be a Sandhurst pal, or an old acquaintance, by his nickname, till later allowed that privilege. Then a Major was always to be addressed as "Major," and not as Major Smith or as Smith alone, much less by his nickname, "Blobs."

Exemptions were allowed on the border line, that is to say a very senior Captain would not necessarily "Major" a very junior Major. Top of all came the

Colonel, and he was always to be addressed as "Sir" or "Colonel." No other Officer in the regiment was ever to be addressed as "Sir," except on parade. There, of course, a subaltern a day senior was to be called "Sir," by his junior. Then came the knotty point of Brevet Major, and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel: and the rule for these was for us juniors to call them "Major" and "Colonel" (but never "Sir" off parade), whilst those near to, or senior to them, regimentally, called them by their surnames.

These good old rules, which were traditional, have got lost sight of somewhat both ways. In some regiments slackness has been introduced, whilst in others an over-official air has come into being. Nothing is more absurd than to hear a subaltern, or Captain, calling a Major "Sir" every second word at lawn-tennis or polo; and nothing is more inappropriate than to hear young Officers calling field-officers by their nicknames, or even surnames.

There are one or two ante-room customs which would perhaps hardly be worth mentioning were they not in some danger of being lost sight of. It might seem superfluous to mention that when a guest, or a stranger, enters the ante-room, it is the custom of the Service for the Officers present to get up and welcome him, whoever he may be. Yet a recent experience shows that a hint in this direction is not unneeded. The writer recently experienced the uncomfortable sensation, when calling on the Mess of a well-known Cavalry regiment, of being completely ignored by everyone—except by whom? The Riding Master, and he was a ranker! Discourtesy of this sort is unpardonable, and it need hardly be added very much opposed to the traditions of the Service.

Again, though the whole spirit of a mess is for Officers to live together in friendly informality when

not on parade, yet the good sense of the Officers themselves has maintained small points of etiquette which, without being in the least derogatory to the individual, encourages the spirit of courteous intercourse between those of different ages and ranks. Thus in no well-regulated regiment would the last-joined subaltern, nor indeed any Officer, remain buried in an arm-chair with his feet on the fender stool when his Colonel came into the room. He would perfectly naturally get up and say: "Good morning, sir," and if he happened to have the cosy chair, offer it to the Colonel. It is ante-room etiquette for the junior always to address the senior first with such ordinary greetings as "Good morning" and "Good evening."

There used to be an old rule that no bets were to be made till the wine had been round at dinner, or, rather, as it was expressed then, "till the cloth had been removed." Such a rule was quite necessary, if only for self-protection from a most boring craze, now happily dead. In some messes, in those days, you could not say anything, or do anything, without someone immediately wanting to bet you that you were a liar—to put it bluntly—or that he could put up someone to beat you, or your nominee, at whatever the game might be. Quite large sums were won and lost, in what most people thought a singularly idiotic manner. The rule remains but it is rarely required, or mentioned.

Another dreadful custom has survived in some regiments, and that is sitting at table for hours and hours after dinner, especially on guest nights. The awful and appalling boredom of this proceeding is only equalled by its stupidity. In old days Officers, and the gentry at large, sat long after dinner in order to drink bottle after bottle of port wine. That was a reason for sitting, good or bad. But now British Officers are the most abstemious of men, and

it is the rarest thing in the world to see an officer take more than one, or two, small glasses of wine after dinner, which he finishes in ten minutes. Yet in some regiments they sit on, and on, for hours, doing nothing but talk and smoke cigarettes ; both of which can equally well be done in the ante-room in comfortable arm-chairs, and thereby free the boys for bridge and billiards.

This is because one of the old rules of the Service has been forgotten. That rule is that directly the wine has been round any Officer can get up and go out without discourtesy or disrespect ; unless, of course, there is a regimental guest, in which case all wait till the Colonel moves ; and he, if he has the remotest tact, will move as soon as he sees that such is the general feeling.

It is now strictly against the King's Regulations for Officers to give plate to the Mess, and the rule is rigidly observed in some regiments, and entirely disregarded in others ! This is one of those cases where it is much better to leave matters of a private nature to the discretion of the Officers. The British Officer is a rum devil in that way ; he is very easily led if approached in a gentlemanly way, but very hard to drive. Above all he hates having his private affairs interfered with, hates being *ordered* to drop time-honoured old customs, and hates being *ordered* to adopt new customs he disapproves of.

Scotch regiments make a special feature of St. Andrew's Day and New Year's Day, and those nights at their Messes are very merry ones. Our brethren across the Border have a quaint custom on this night, which in some Scottish regiments is extended to every guest night. Towards the end of dinner the Mess Sergeant hands to each Officer in turn a small shallow cup with two handles, full of liqueur whiskey. This is called a "quaich," I believe (but I do not know how to spell it). Anyway,



call it what you may, what you have to do is to stand up and drink off the whiskey in it at a gulp. You then twist the cup over and outwards, and kiss the bottom, to show it is empty.

In all Scottish regiments, whether Highland or Lowland, there are swarms of pipers, and these march round the table after dinner, and make what is to some people a cheerful noise. Each piper has on his pipes the banner of his Captain; the arms, and escutcheons, and so forth, of the said bold Captain being emblazoned forth thereon. After walking round the table several times the pipers line up behind the Colonel, and the principal guest. If the principal guest is a Scotchman he puts on a sort of ecstatic air and drums the table with his fingers, and in extreme cases beats time with his feet. If, on the other hand, the principal guest happens to be an Englishman or an Irishman, his face, and demeanour, are quite worth studying.

The Englishman starts with a faint and fatuous smile, half out of politeness, and half to show a kindly tolerance towards these brave bare-legged barbarians, and their ideas of music. Gradually, however, especially if he has had much wine, the noise gets to his head and bewilders him, and you see that same wild sort of look come into his eyes, that you see in the face of him who seeks the steward, on a rough day, on the Irish boat.

A real old hand, who likes Highland regiments, and loves dining with them, but hates pipes, goes prepared with a pair of ear wads, such as Naval Officers pop into their ears before the firing of big guns commences in a battleship turret, but he must be exceedingly careful not to be caught inserting them. An Irishman, having a weird instrument of his own, not unlike a pipe, is more inured to this form of hardship; but I have seen him taken two ways. Either he got sadder, and sadder, and



sadder, till he finally wept on the Colonel's shoulder ; or, on the contrary, the martial strains rose to his head, and he started strange and penetrating yells, such as the Scotch themselves indulge in.

In his own Irish Mess, and on his own St. Patrick's night the Irish Officer is seen to great advantage, and one feels quite sure that St. Patrick himself must have a very bad headache next morning. On one occasion we were dining with the 18th Royal Irish on St. Patrick's night, and next day several of us had to go to a neighbouring Cantonment to play in a cricket match. We had a reserved railway carriage in the siding, and after a most jovial and enjoyable evening ending with supper at 2 a.m., we went to bed in our railway carriage.

Next day about eleven o'clock we were collecting ourselves for cricket, when we missed our stalwart wicket-keeper, six feet two inches in height and weighing fourteen stone. Enquiries were set afoot amongst guards, stationmasters, servants, drivers, coolies, but not a trace of him could be found.

"By Jove, I believe we have left him behind in the 18th Royal Irish Mess!" suggested someone.

Hasty dash to the telegraph office, and urgent wire sent :

"Have lost our wicket-keeper. Please make enquiries."

Not long afterwards came the mysterious answer.

"Wicket-keeper found in tablecloth, despatched by next train."

Just as we were sitting down to lunch up rolled a very little tum-tum with a very large man in it. Our lost wicket-keeper!

Of course he was received with roars of laughter and chaff, and when these had subsided, he made his explanation.

"You see, boys, it was like this. After supper me and some of the other boys got talking. And

what with one thing and another, one said, how mighty clever it was the way the Sergeant, and Tom O'Grady the head waiter, whipped off the side slips, the whole length of the table, and never spilt a glass, or spoon, or gave anyone a flick in the face either. Another of the boys pooh-poohed this, and said he could do it easy; and it was only a matter of screwing the blamed thing up tight, and giving a sharp pull. So what with one thing and another they got the slips put on again, and then we had a sort of match, starboard side against port side, to see who could whip the slips off quickest. It wasn't long before they got tired of that, and then somebody, bad cess to him, suggested doing the same thing only with one of the boys screwed up in each slip, and they voted me in for one. Well, of course, a slip wasn't big enough for me, so they got a whole tablecloth, and they laid me along at full length in it. Then about four of the boys at each end wound the tablecloth opposite ways till I must have looked like a long white sausage. Then one of the young savages gave a whoo! hoop! and one lot let go, and the other pulled, and I sped along that polished table like a greased pig, and came with no light bump on the floor at the other end. Then they tied up the two long ends of the tablecloth and left me, for some other devilment. Sure and I was a bit tired perhaps, for thereupon I went to sleep quite snug and happy, and didn't wake till the Mess Sergeant fell over me coming to see about laying breakfast this morning."

In Welsh regiments they have a curious custom on that night of the year on which they eat a feast, and drink libations, to their patron saint, St. David. Everyone, who has not previously done so, is obliged on this occasion to "pass the leek," in other words eat a raw onion; and this is done with much ceremony. As it comes to each novice's turn he has

to stand up on his chair, and behind him is grouped the regimental goat held by two drummer boys, and several more of the regimental drummers, and the Mess Sergeant. The Mess Sergeant then hands the victim a plate full of leeks, and he, if wise, chooses the smallest he can hastily discover. This he solemnly eats, whilst the drummers beat a fanfare and the goat wistfully contemplates a charge on his immediate rear, and the company generally chaffs, derides, and cheers him. And so on to the next and the next.

Dining once on this auspicious occasion with the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers there was an Italian Roman Catholic priest present, evidently inured to this rich diet, who thought that he was meant to eat the whole plateful of leeks, which he proceeded to do with great gusto. And the more he ate, the more everyone cheered him, and the more they cheered, the more the priest smiled and the more he ate; till at last everyone was in hysterics. Which hilarity apparently so weakened the two boys holding the goat that they let him slip. Whereupon he promptly charged the next thing ahead, which happened to be the holy father's chair, and over went that zealous prelate backwards. For a few moments there was a fine medley of drummer boys, priest, drums, goats, and onions.

Everyone also on St. David's night has to wear a leek in his buttonhole, which in old days must have been distinctly bad for one's clothes, and made them smell long, and strong. But nowadays it has been ordained that one may wear a glass imitation of the same, and this somewhat tempers the wind to one's female relations when one gets home. It is not so much the leek itself that is unpleasant to eat, though most people would rather pass it by, but it is the aftermath to oneself and one's friends. For the whole of the rest of the evening everything

tastes of onions ; one's wine, coffee, cigars, whiskey and soda ; and as for one's friends who are not in the same plight, they say, "Tush ! tush " and "Begone."

At Mess the senior combatant Officer presides, be he only a subaltern. For a Mess dinner is a parade which every unmarried Officer must attend unless he gets leave of absence, and the senior combatant Officer is for the time being responsible for the discipline and order of the Mess.

An Officer has no longer personally to ask the Colonel for leave of absence from dinner, he merely writes his name in a book as "dining out." And should he omit this formality his crime is brought home to him by having to pay for a dinner he has not eaten.

Once at a Mess in a neighbouring station one guest-night it so happened that the senior combatant Officer was a subaltern, and he, according to procedure and the established custom of the Service, went in to dinner first, taking the guest of the evening with him. There happened at the time to be attached to the regiment a Surgeon-Captain, as they were then called, who took great umbrage at this, and made himself rather unpleasant. He said he was senior to the subaltern, and should take in the guest of the evening. But the matter did not stop there, for next day he started writing official letters on the subject. Then, as the subaltern expresses it, he "got it on the neck," for the King's Regulations are perfectly clear on the subject.

He not only "got it on the neck," but a final paragraph commanded that he should be "transferred to the Corps of Guides for discipline."

I don't think we were hard on him, but the rough and ready, good-natured chaff of a big Mess does wonders, and at the end of six months he turned



out an excellent fellow, and to this day can never speak too highly of his time with the old Guides.

Life in a big Mess has a very salutary effect on those who live in it. The prig ceases to be priggish : it isn't good enough. The cad, if by chance he has slipped in, ceases to be caddish : it isn't good enough. The real "bad hat," or untamable "bounder" quietly disappears from His Majesty's Service.

This Mess life has been of incalculable value not only to young Officers, but also to Civilians, especially those who administer the Government in India. On the Frontiers of India these civil servants invariably live at one or other of the Frontier Messes, and it is noticeable right through their after careers, their breadth of character, knowledge of how to deal with their fellow-men, besides tact, good temper, and *savoir faire*, that have been imbibed when sucking-civilians in the Frontier Mess.

One often hears querulous complaints about the expenses of a Mess, and "Father of Six" or "Anxious Mother" writes to the papers about it. Let me, who have spent nearly forty years in many Messes, reassure them. It is not the Mess that is expensive, it is running up to Town for week-ends, that costs money. If a subaltern sticks to his regiment, wherever it is quartered, and only goes away for his regular leave, and during that leave he probably has his own people and friends who are glad to see him, he will find that he can live with perfect comfort in His Majesty's Service on very small means.

The very large influx of Officers into the Service during the Great War, and the difficulty, at short notice, of making these acquainted with the customs of the Service tempts me to make a few notes which may be found useful.

In the first place an Officer should always be



properly dressed. It is not good form, besides being against the King's Regulations, to wear fancy articles of apparel when in uniform.<sup>1</sup>

It is better not to smoke at all in uniform in public, but if it is a matter of life and death a cigarette may be permitted ; even in cases of extreme urgency or exhaustion a cigar. But never a pipe. To smoke a pipe in uniform in Pall Mall, or Hyde Park, is a more grievous offence than to elope with the Colonel's mother. Though I have known that too being done—once.

To walk arm in arm with a lady when in uniform, and more especially for the Officer to take the lady's arm, is not considered at all correct. Unless, of course, either the lady or the Officer suffer from an infirmity of the legs, or other serious disease, in which case it is allowable. In fog, on a dark night, or at a bad crossing, it is permissible for an Officer to help a lady in distress by giving her his arm.

To answer a soldier's salute, or to salute a senior Officer who passes, are not things to be ashamed of or shunned. The soldier is not saluting 2nd Lieutenant John Smith, he is saluting the King's uniform, and it behoves the wearer of the King's uniform to look the soldier in the face, and return that salute smartly.

In our Service we do not salute everyone senior to us in the streets. A subaltern does not, by the custom of the Service, salute another subaltern, but he does salute a Field Officer, or a General. The salute of sentries should carefully be noted, and returned.

One often sees young Officers, either from bashfulness or ignorance, pass the Lifeguardsmen at Whitehall, and the sentries on Buckingham Palace without returning their salute. These sentries it

<sup>1</sup> Of course great latitude is naturally allowable in the field.

will be noticed are most punctilious in saluting every Officer who passes.

The matter of ladies is a somewhat delicate one. But perhaps we may best put it that an Officer, wearing the King's uniform, should not be seen about in public with any lady who would not be welcome at his mother's tea-table.

The last and best advice an old soldier can give a young one, is never at any time, or under any circumstances, disgrace the King's uniform.

## CHAPTER XX

### SOME FEW VICTORIA CROSSES

The Victoria Cross—The Royal Warrant—Lieut. R. C. Hart—Lieut. E. P. Leach—Lieut. Walter Hamilton—Capt. A. G. Hammond—Capt. W. J. Vousden—Revd. J. W. Adams—Major White—Lieut. Wilson, R.N.—Q Battery, R.H.A.—Lieut.-Col. R. B. Adams—Lt. Lord Fincastle—Lieut. H. MacLean—Lieut. F. A. Maxwell—Lieut. G. Wyllly—Sepoy Lalla

**D**URING the best part of forty years' soldiering and in the course of many campaigns, one has naturally come across many cases of gallantry for which the Victoria Cross has been awarded, and perhaps an equal number where it has not. Curiously enough, the standard appears somewhat to vary in different campaigns, and even with the views of those who have the recommending. This apparently should not be so, for the Victoria Cross Warrant is open to all to read and is very clearly expressed. Lord Roberts, for instance, had great difficulty in getting the Victoria Cross for an Officer who had displayed great coolness and bravery, because it had become a rooted impression that it was absolutely necessary to rescue a wounded man before an Officer or soldier could get the Cross. Yet there is nothing in the Warrant about rescuing wounded men.

In the same way, it is not generally known that the Victoria Cross can be bestowed on the spot by an Admiral or General Officer under certain circumstances.

As perhaps few people know the exact wording of

the Victoria Cross Warrant, it may be interesting to give all the important parts of it.

## VICTORIA CROSS WARRANT

### VICTORIA R.

Whereas . . . for the purpose of attaining an end so desirable as that of rewarding individual instances of merit and valour, We have instituted and created, and by these presents, for Us, Our heirs and successors, institute a new naval and military decoration which We are desirous should be highly prized and eagerly sought after by the Officers and men of our naval and military services, and are graciously pleased to make, ordain and establish the following rules and ordinances for the government of the same, which shall from henceforth be inviolably observed and kept :—

Firstly. (Name and description of Victoria Cross.)

Secondly. (To be worn on left breast with blue riband for Navy, and red for Army.)

Thirdly. (Names of recipients to be Gazetted.)

Fourthly. (Bars to V.C. for further acts of gallantry.)

Fifthly. It is ordained that the Cross shall only be awarded to those Officers and men who have performed acts of conspicuous bravery or devotion to the country in the presence of the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

Sixthly. It is ordained, with a view to place all persons on a perfectly equal footing in relation to eligibility for the decoration, that neither rank, nor long service, nor wounds, nor any other circumstance or condition save the merit of conspicuous bravery, shall be

held to establish a sufficient claim to the honor.

Seventhly. It is ordained that the decoration may be conferred on the spot where the act . . . has been performed. . . .

I. When the fleet or army, in which such act has been performed, is under the eye and command of an admiral or general officer commanding the forces.

II. Where the naval or military force is under the eye and command of an admiral or commodore commanding a squadron or detached naval force, or of a general commanding a corps, division or brigade on a distinct and detached service, when such admiral, commodore or general officer shall have the power of conferring the decoration on the spot, subject to confirmation by Us.

Eighthly. It is ordained, where such act shall not have been performed in sight of a commanding officer as aforesaid, then the claimant to the honor shall prove the act to the satisfaction of the captain or officer commanding the ship, or to the officer commanding the regiment to which the claimant belongs, and such captain or such commanding officer shall report the same through the usual channels . . . who shall call for such description and attestation of the act as he may think requisite, and on approval shall recommend the grant of the decoration.

Ninthly. (Recipient to be publicly decorated.)

Tenthly. (Ditto.)

Eleventhly. (Name to be registered.)

Twelfthly. (Special cases unprovided for above, how to be dealt with.)



Thirteenthly. It is ordained that, in the event of a gallant and daring act having been performed by a squadron, ship's company, a detached body of seamen and marines, not under fifty in number, or by a brigade, regiment, troop, or company in which the admiral, general or other officer commanding such forces, may deem that all are equally brave and distinguished, and that no special selection can be made by them, then in such case the admiral, general or other officer commanding may direct that for any such body of seamen and marines, or for every troop or company of soldiers, one officer shall be selected by the officers engaged for the decoration: and in like manner one petty officer or non-commissioned officer shall be selected by the petty officers and non-commissioned officers engaged: and two seamen or private soldiers or marines shall be selected by the seamen, or private soldiers or marines engaged respectively for the decoration. . . .

Fourteenthly. (A Pension of £10 a year to warrant, petty, non-commissioned officers, and seamen, privates and marines. £5 extra for each bar.)

Fifteenthly. (Providing for forfeiture of the decoration.)

By Her Majesty's Command,

PANMURE.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,  
*January 29th, 1856.*

In relating the story of how a few Victoria Crosses have been won, it must be remembered that these are not necessarily selected or typical cases, but merely those which are within the writer's personal cognisance.

During the Afghan War, 1878-80, two Columns

were sent into the Bazaar Valley to punish raiders on our lines of communication. Having completed their work, they were returning to their former stations by different routes, one leading to the Khyber Pass and the other to the Jellalabad Valley. Serving with the former Column, which was under command of Sir Frederick Maude, father of Sir Stanley Maude now commanding in Mesopotamia, was a young sapper subaltern named Reginald Hart.<sup>1</sup>

Reginald Hart had already won three Humane Society's Medals, whilst still a Cadet at Woolwich, for a signal act of bravery. He was returning from leave in France, and was going on board the boat at Boulogne in very rough weather. The ship was grinding against the jetty, and the motion made the gangway very unsafe and unstable. A lady going on board slipped, missed her footing, and fell through into the sea between the ship and the jetty. The Gentleman-Cadet with great promptitude risked being crushed to death, and being drowned, and dropped through after her, and saved her life.

For this brave act Reginald Hart was awarded the English Humane Society's Medal, the French Humane Society's Medal, and a special medal presented by the town of Boulogne. In later life, as a Colonel, this gallant sapper earned a clasp to his Humane Society's Medal for diving, in full dress when returning from a parade, after a driver of the Royal Artillery who had been thrown into the water whilst crossing a bridge.

On the occasion when he won the Victoria Cross, he happened to be with the rearguard of Sir Frederick Maude's column when a Sowar rode up to it at speed, and reported that he and another Sowar had been sent with a despatch from the Jellalabad Valley column. That as they rode along

<sup>1</sup> Now General Sir Reginald Hart, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.V.O.

a heavy fire was opened upon them, that his companion had been severely wounded and his horse shot, and that he himself had ridden on to deliver the despatches, and to send succour back to his wounded comrade.

Reginald Hart overheard this converse, and there and then started to run back to rescue the wounded Sowar. Now in civilised warfare a wounded man is, or was till the Germans put back the clock three hundred years, a non-combatant and safe till he can be attended to. But the Afridis had then no such code, and would murder a wounded man out of hand. The young Sapper-Officer therefore ran back, it might be for miles as far as he knew, into a Pass which in all probability was swarming with expert riflemen, alone and armed only with a revolver, to rescue a wounded comrade from a horrible death. And we had had some ocular demonstration of what that death might be.

Captain Stedman, with a detachment from the rearguard of the 24th Punjab Infantry, started to double after him, and eventually came up with Reginald Hart, to find that he had driven off the obscene vultures who were hovering round their prey, and was standing guard over the prostrate Sowar.

For this act of prompt gallantry the Victoria Cross was awarded to Lieutenant Reginald Clare Hart, Royal Engineers.

Another sapper subaltern, E. P. Leach,<sup>1</sup> earned the Victoria Cross shortly afterwards, also in Afghanistan. Leach was then employed in surveying the hitherto unmapped areas of the occupied country, and was out with an escort of the 45th Sikhs under Captain Barclay, and of The Guides Cavalry under Lieutenant Walter Hamilton, who himself a few

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Edward Pemberton Leach, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.V.O., died 1913.

weeks later got the Victoria Cross. This survey work is highly dangerous in Afghanistan, and the mountainous country between that country and India. These people have a fanatical hatred for anything to do with a map, for as the Pathan saying is :

“First comes one Englishman to shoot birds or beasts, then come two Englishmen to make a map, and then comes an army to take the country. It is better therefore to kill the first Englishman.”

An escort, though of great assistance—indeed, without it survey in these regions would be impossible—finds it very difficult to adequately guard the surveyors. For they and their assistants are frequently perched about on all the highest mountains, sometimes over a considerable area.

The Afghans had carefully watched Lieutenant Leach and his party, and at a favourable moment attacked it with superior forces. Captain Barclay commanding the escort was mortally wounded, and the whole of the little force was in danger of being annihilated when Leach promptly took command, rescued Barclay from a horrible death, and boldly taking the offensive completely defeated the enemy. In the fight Leach himself was severely wounded.

Sir Sam Browne, himself a V.C. man, recommended Lieutenant Leach for the Victoria Cross, and this in due course was bestowed upon him.

The deed for which Walter Hamilton of The Guides earned the Victoria Cross was of a different type of bravery. It was resource and boldness at a critical moment whereby the tide in a battle was turned to victory. At the moment things were not going particularly well in that particular battle, the battle of Fattehabad in Afghanistan.

A squadron of The Guides Cavalry were therefore ordered to charge. There were only two British Officers with the squadron. One was Major Wigram

Battye, and the other was Walter Hamilton, a young subaltern who had just joined. Almost immediately after the charge started Major Wigram Battye was first wounded and then killed, so that the command devolved on the young subaltern just joined.

Nothing dismayed, the boy swept on with his squadron, but just before he reached the enemy he was faced by a horrible shock. A deep ravine with a nine-feet sheer drop into it, a flat, sandy bed, and then a sheer cliff nine feet high on the far bank. Along that bank the enemy, posted and firing heavily. That was not a very encouraging obstacle to come across in a Cavalry charge. But the young Irishman's blood was up: he neither checked nor wavered, but made a clean jump down into the bed of the ravine and his squadron came tumbling after him. For the Indian trooper will go anywhere his Sahib leads.

Arrived in the ravine bed, all by instinct galloped towards the far bank which brought them more or less into dead ground; then scattering right and left sought egress. Hamilton was one of the first to find a way, a rivulet cut or a goat track, and struggled out on to the plain beyond. His men hither and thither found similar places, and on their active little stallions scrambled up. Then each and all, led by Hamilton and without reforming, fell on the enemy and turned the tide of battle.

Walter Hamilton was a very calm and unperturbable boy in ordinary life, and that evening, chatting with him, he seemed chiefly concerned with the fact that "some infernal fellow had cut his boot open." Which indeed he had, from the instep to the toe, and a brand-new pair too.

Sir Charles Gough, who was commanding in this battle, and himself a most gallant Cavalry leader and Victoria Cross man, recommended Walter Hamilton for the soldier's highest reward for his



gallantry on this occasion. But he did not live to learn that he had received it, for he was killed in the defence of the Kabul Residency before the *Gazette* appeared.

The case of Captain Hammond of The Guides is the one alluded to elsewhere in which Lord Roberts had great difficulty in obtaining the Victoria Cross for him because of a curious official obsession. Lord Roberts's force was besieged in Sherpur, but that gallant leader was not one to submit to a passive defence. He therefore made occasional strong counter-attacks. One of these was made against the Asmai heights to the right rear of Kabul city. After inflicting considerable loss on the enemy, the force was being withdrawn for the night into Sherpur. A retirement of this sort is a very delicate operation against hordes of Afghans. Every stone and rock produces a man, and these all hurl themselves, with great bravery and determination, on the retiring troops.

Captain Hammond, with the Dogra Company of The Guides, had the post of honour and danger, as the extreme rearguard of the British force. During the retirement he was very heavily attacked, and it was of utmost importance to hold on to a small hillock, till positions behind were in their turn occupied. Captain Hammond was a very powerful man, and stood no nonsense from Afghans, or anyone else. He therefore seized a rifle and bayonet and, practically alone, held the hill-top. Lord Roberts, who himself saw the incident, at once recommended Captain Hammond for the Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery and devotion. But some worthy person with a pen refused to forward the recommendation, because it did not appear that Captain Hammond had rescued a wounded man. As a matter of fact, Captain Hammond had rescued several wounded men, and especially one. The

gentleman with the pen being now satisfied, Captain Hammond received a most gallantly won Victoria Cross.

Captain Vousden, of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, and afterwards Commandant of The Guides, won the Victoria Cross at Kabul about the same time as Captain Hammond. His was a deed of prowess of the old knightly order, when mighty men of valour entered into the battle, and with their own right hands showed who was the better man. Captain Vousden was not only a very powerful man, but an expert swordsman on horseback. He and his squadron were in camp, off-saddled, when it was suddenly reported by one of the outlying picquets that a body of the enemy some hundreds strong were sweeping round a neighbouring spur with a view to attacking the camp.

Orders were at once issued for Captain Vousden to turn out with his squadron of the 5th Punjab Cavalry and check this onslaught. When a regiment is off-saddled and in camp, it takes some appreciable time to collect the men, saddle up, and get moving. As time was a matter of great importance, and the situation critical, Captain Vousden took the first eight men who were ready, and with them stoutly charged the Afghans. He himself killed five with his own hand, and five out of his own eight men were killed, but Vousden escaped without a scratch. The rest of the squadron now arriving, he completely defeated and dispersed the Afghans.

This was a very fine instance of personal daring, great danger encountered at once against great odds, in a devoted and successful endeavour to gain time, and save an imminent disaster.

There has always been much controversy as to whether it is better to use the edge, or the point, of a sword, that is whether to cut or thrust. All the old school of Cavalry soldiers, men who had been in

many a personal encounter, maintained that the natural instinct of a man is to cut, not to thrust ; and that therefore, however much he was taught to thrust in peace time, the moment he got into a *mêlée* he would forget all that instruction, and lay about him as nature ordained. This was Captain Vousden's experience : in each case he first parried, and then cut. He said that if he had thrust, his sword would probably have remained firmly embedded in his first victim, and left him unarmed. Or at best he would have got tangled up each time, getting his point clear, and meanwhile lay open to attack.

For this great deed of daring, on true old heroic lines, Captain Vousden was recommended for the Victoria Cross by Lord Roberts, and my recollection is, that the same knight of the pen who objected to Captain Hammond's V.C., again intervened in this case. But happily he was again defeated and Captain Vousden received his well-earned reward.

Padré Adams was of the sporting-parson class. As an Army Chaplain his view was that to get to know Officers and soldiers, you must join in their pursuits, and meet them daily on common ground. The soldier, and his Officer, go to Church Parade because the King's Regulations ordain that they should do so. They have also to be particularly smart on that occasion, and this means a considerable amount of polishing of buttons, and belts, to the private soldier. Arrived at the church, the soldier goes through a perfunctory service and hears, or does not hear, a short sermon from a gentleman in white, with outwardly respectful attention, and departs home none the better and none the worse. The Army Chaplain's position is a difficult one, unless he grasps at once that he and Thomas Atkins, and his Officer, are of the same clay, only one wears a white robe, and the other a scarlet tunic, in church.

Padré Adams grasped that essential truth. He was a week-day friend with the men, and he still more laid himself out to be a week-day friend with the Officers. To this end he played cricket, and polo, and hunted with the Peshawar Vale Hounds. He was a poor polo player, but he played his best, and secured what he was driving at, that is meeting young Officers somewhere else than in church, where they could not chaff him back. In those days, for polo was in its young days, what appealed a great deal to the Officers' Mess was the hard man, who could ride far and hard.

Nobody for choice holds one service in one place in the morning, and another forty miles off the same evening, but Padré Adams did frequently, and probably not from excessive love of riding great distances in the hot sun, but because these feats brought him nearer the most difficult portion of his congregations.

He used thus frequently to hold one Parade Service at Peshawar, and that same afternoon an Evening Service at Kohat, forty miles distant. But not only was, and is, Kohat forty miles distant from Peshawar by road, but that road passes through the Kohat Pass, a strip of tribal territory in which any bandit gang might lie secure for purposes of highway robbery and murder. Thus each of these rides shone in the subaltern's eyes as a "dam' sporting thing," and he thought all the better of a parson who could do them.

Thus Padré Adams was dubbed a "sporting parson," and that helped his work immensely. There was no one at the time who had more influence for good, amongst Officers and men, than Padré Adams.

When the Afghan War broke out Padré Adams went to the front as a Chaplain, and accompanied Lord Roberts to Kabul. There was much fierce fighting in and around Kabul during the winter of



1879-80. A small British Force was in the centre of an enemy's country, surrounded by great hordes of armed but undisciplined warriors, dealing a blow here and another there, much as does one stout-hearted man, with his back to a wall, against a dozen assailants. In one of these encounters the 9th Lancers were ordered to charge, but their effort was broken by a swollen stream which suddenly lay in their way. Great bodies of Afghans, quick to seize a chance, then attacked them, hoping to capture some Horse Artillery guns which accompanied the Cavalry.

During this hot fight Padré Adams was well up, riding his pony, when he noticed a man of the 9th Lancers wounded, and on foot, and staggering back and in great jeopardy of being killed by the Afghans. Jumping off his pony, the Padré was attending to and helping this man, when his own pony in the hurly-burly took fright, and ran away. Helping the soldier into safety Padré Adams returned on foot to see if he could be of further assistance.

Reaching the deep-flooded rivulet, which had interrupted the Cavalry charge, he saw two lancers pinned down by their horses and in imminent risk of drowning, whilst the Afghans were close up on the opposite bank. Without a moment's hesitation the Padré jumped into the icy water, regardless of the heavy fire, and rescued both soldiers.

Lord Roberts, himself the bravest of the brave, recommended Padré Adams for the Victoria Cross, which in due course Queen Victoria bestowed on him. He was the first parson to receive that greatly prized decoration.

I last met Padré Adams preaching in Sandringham Church, before King Edward and Queen Alexandra, when Prince and Princess of Wales, with his Victoria Cross and two Afghan medals on his surplice, and found the same human spirit in his



sermon, amidst such greatly differing surroundings.

One of the bravest men, and an Irish gentleman to boot, was Sir George White.<sup>1</sup> After twenty-six years' service he was still a Major in the Gordon Highlanders, and had never seen a shot fired. But his chance came in the Afghan War. His was a case again where the scribes objected that he had not saved a wounded man. But here again Lord Roberts insisted that there was no word in the Warrant about rescuing wounded men, and that Major White had on several occasions behaved with conspicuous bravery and devotion. The two incidents for which he was officially granted the Victoria Cross, took place at the battles of Charasiah and Kandahar. Charasiah was one of Lord Roberts's most critical battles, and had to be won at all costs. At the most crucial moment in that battle it was most essential that a hill on our left should be taken. Major White and a wing of the Gordon Highlanders were sent to achieve this object. The hill was steep, the defence stout and strong, but at length Major White, leading with two men only, and these exhausted, won his way up. Going on alone he shot dead the leader of the enemy, and as the men struggled up permanently captured the position.

The second act of valour, which was bracketed with the first in the bestowal of the Cross, took place at the battle of Kandahar, after Lord Roberts's famous march from Kabul to Kandahar. Here again, leading the advanced wing of the Gordon Highlanders, was Major White, and opposite them was a battery of the enemy's guns. These Major White charged, himself racing on in front, and personally capturing the first one.

In connection with Major White a nice story was

<sup>1</sup> Field-Marshal Sir George White, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., O.M.

told by Sir Herbert MacPherson, who commanded the brigade in which the Gordon Highlanders served. Sir Herbert was at Osborne on a visit to Queen Victoria, and Her Majesty asked him point-blank, why she always heard of Major White and the Gordon Highlanders, and seldom of Colonel Parker and the Gordon Highlanders ; Colonel Parker being the Colonel of the regiment. Sir Herbert at once replied :

“Partly, Madam, because Major White is an excellent Officer and has done exceedingly well ; and partly because Colonel Parker never thinks of himself, but always gives credit to those serving under him.”

In the Soudan a Naval Officer, Captain A. K. Wilson,<sup>1</sup> known as “Tug” Wilson, was one of those who received the Victoria Cross. It was at the battle of El Teb, one of our earlier battles in the Soudan, when we always fought in hollow squares. This tactical formation was used partly because it was the simplest way of guarding and protecting the baggage and convoy, and partly because the dense bush made it difficult to know from which direction to expect an attack. So the troops stood foursquare, and at night cut down thorn bushes and formed a zareba round.

The weak point of any formation with salients is the apex of those salients. In a square the corners. At these, therefore, were usually placed the machine guns, or Artillery if we had any. At El Teb the blue-jackets with a machine gun were given the defence of one corner of the square, for naturally all battles of this description were fought on the defensive, victory being achieved by rifle and gun-fire. Wilson was present on the naval commander's staff. At a critical moment the gun jammed, as they frequently did in those days, what with sand and one thing or another, and a determined rush was made

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Sir A. K. Wilson, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.V.O., O.M.

by the dauntless Arabs at what had now become a very weak spot. Wilson was not only a stout-hearted sailor, but also physically a strong man, and he took on the Arabs in hand-to-hand fight.

Many of the Arabs were armed with heavy swords, copied from those carried by our Crusaders in the old wars between the Cross and the Crescent. Some of these were the original blades used by our forefathers, and I was fortunate enough to secure one of these, with the English lion and the cross engraved upon it, now on the walls of The Guides' Mess. Against these heavy swords a light Naval Officer's sword was not of much avail, and Lieutenant Wilson's sword was broken off short at the hilt.

Nothing dismayed he used the handle as a knuckle-duster, and went in at the Arabs with his fists. The bluejackets followed suit and in good old British fashion knocked out the astonished Arabs. Meanwhile the gun had been got into working order again, the situation cleared, and a hard-earned victory was added to British laurels.

For his great personal bravery, and splendid example, Wilson received the Victoria Cross.

It is not often that three Officers in the same regiment get the Victoria Cross on one day. Occasionally as in the case of Major Phipps-Hornby and Q Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, at Sanna's Post in the South African War, Victoria Crosses are given collectively to the Battery, and the Battery, or other body of troops, elect the actual recipients—One Officer, one Warrant or Non-Commissioned Officer, and two men.

The three Officers on the present occasion were Lieut.-Colonel R. B. Adams, who commanded the Corps of Guides ; Lieutenant H. MacLean, Adjutant of the Guides' Cavalry ; and Lieutenant Lord Fincastle, 16th Lancers, attached to the Guides' Cavalry for the Campaign. The scene was the Swat Valley,

down which flows the Swat River. At its lower end the valley is well cultivated, and some three miles wide in parts. Proceeding upstream the valley narrows, and spurs from the mountains on each side run down and touch the river at intervals. Between these spurs are bays of cultivated land.

The British force was proceeding up the valley and found one of these spurs strongly held by the enemy, and it was necessary to drive them off this, by a frontal attack. Sir Bindon Blood, who was in command, directed the Infantry to attack, and held his Cavalry ready to go in pursuit, directly the enemy were driven off the spur.

When the right moment arrived, and the enemy gave signs of breaking, the Cavalry received their orders, and proceeded to obey them. Now the only way of getting round the spur, where it abutted on the river, was by a narrow single-file track which for about a mile skirted the spur at river level. Beyond was an open cultivated bay, about two miles across, and much intersected with irrigation water-courses. On the far side of the cultivated bay was another spur running into the river. It was the intention of Sir Bindon Blood that the Cavalry should catch the flying enemy as they crossed the cultivated bay. But as all Cavalry soldiers know, a body of Cavalry moving fast in single file along a tortuous and rock-strewn track is apt to get very spun out. The leading files get through quick enough, too quick unless checked ; and the further to the rear the line reaches the more strenuous are the efforts of horse and man to keep up.

The leading files with an Officer soon passed through the defile, and arriving in the open saw the enemy fleeing before them. They waited a bit to collect more men, but fearing the fleeting chance might be missed soon set forth in pursuit.

With this small leading body of Cavalry was a young



Officer of Infantry, who was acting as war correspondent to one of the daily papers. He was riding a pony which was evidently not accustomed to be with charging Cavalry, and mad with excitement set off at a tearing gallop, easily outdistancing the troopers on their more heavily weighted mounts. Across the valley he tore quite out of control, straight for the next spur, which now could be seen to be strongly held, right down to the edge of the cultivation. Nothing could stop the mad pony, and alone he charged at the enemy. When he was quite close, 150 yards or so, a scattered volley from the enemy killed the pony and severely wounded the war correspondent. Meanwhile Colonel Adams, having reformed the Cavalry as it emerged in dribblets from the defile, pushed on as hard as he could in support of the advanced parties. When he got close he saw that up a rock-strewn mountain was no place for Cavalry to charge, so he diverted them off to the left to occupy a ziarat, or walled-in graveyard, and thence ordered them to open a heavy fire on the enemy on the spur. Meanwhile the war correspondent lay out in the open, liable to be cut to pieces at any moment.

This could not be, so first Hector MacLean rode out and dismounting tried to lift the half-conscious correspondent on to his horse. The enemy were only 150 yards distant and firing heavily. Thus whilst Hector MacLean was labouring to lift him the correspondent was shot dead and almost immediately after the gallant young Adjutant of the Guides' Cavalry was himself mortally wounded.

Almost simultaneously Colonel Adams on horseback and Lord Fincastle on foot dashed out, for the enemy shouting exultingly were swarming down on their prey. Colonel Adams mounted, and with pistol in hand stood out boldly to stem the rush, whilst Lord Fincastle lifted the dying officer and



carried him to safety. Marvellous to relate, though subject to a very hot fire at close range, 100 to 150 yards, Colonel Adams escaped with a graze, though his horse was shot. Lord Fincastle miraculously escaped unscathed.

Colonel Adams and Lord Fincastle received the Victoria Cross for their bravery and devotion on this occasion, and Hector MacLean was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. Two or three of the N.C.O.'s and men of the Guides' Cavalry were also decorated with the Order of Merit for their gallant assistance under very desperate circumstances.

Another very gallant Officer, Francis Aylmer Maxwell,<sup>1</sup> who fought his first Campaign in The Guides, has since earned the Distinguished Service Order, the Victoria Cross, and a second bar to the D.S.O. in three later Campaigns.

For the Distinguished Service Order, Lieutenant Maxwell was recommended in the Relief of Chitral during a retirement when he carried in Colonel F. D. Battye, the mortally wounded Commandant of The Guides, under a very hot fire. The reward was not granted then, but with this record behind him he received it for further services in Tirah. The second bar he received for gallantry in action whilst leading his regiment in France.

It was in South Africa, whilst yet a subaltern, that this brave soldier won the Victoria Cross. He was serving with Roberts's Light Horse, a Colonial Corps recently raised for service in the Boer War, and formed part of General Broadwood's force, which was returning from the eastern portion of the Orange Free State towards Bloemfontein. On leaving Sanna's Post, the force fell into an ambuscade, very cleverly and boldly contrived by De Wet.

Part of General Broadwood's force consisted of Q Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, under Major

<sup>1</sup> Lieut.-Col. F. A. Maxwell, V.C., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C.

E. J. Phipps-Hornby. This battery at once unlimbered and came into action against the enemy, who were concealed in the bed of a dry spruit. But the range was very short, only four hundred yards or so, and the enemy's rifle-fire killed men and horses, and for the moment put the battery out of action. Major Phipps-Hornby seeing that thus exposed his battery could not be of use, whilst it was in great danger of being captured, determined to withdraw it a short distance. This was a very desperate undertaking, but was successfully accomplished, in so far as four guns were concerned.

In this hazardous work Lieutenant Maxwell at once joined as a volunteer, and exhibited "the greatest possible gallantry" in the work of rescue. Five times he went out into the open under what was termed "an infernal fire" and helped to bring in two guns and three limbers, one of which he, with Captain Humphreys, R.H.A., and some gunners, dragged in by hand, all the horses being shot.

This was an occasion when the collective award of the Victoria Cross was made to Q Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, and it was also awarded to Lieutenant Maxwell.

Young Wylly, of The Guides, earned the Victoria Cross in South Africa, when, I think, a Corporal in the Corps of Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen. His father was an old Army Colonel, who had settled in Tasmania, and when the Boer War broke out this son, like many other patriotic men, enlisted and went to the front. When out foraging one day near Warm Bad in the Transvaal, Wylly and his party fell into a veritable hornets' nest of Boers. As they were riding through a narrow gorge a sudden burst of fire knocked out six of the eight who composed the advanced party. Wylly himself was one of the wounded. But he rose to the occasion, and with great courage and determination faced the situa-

tion. He had become the only man left able to use a rifle, and alone behind a rock kept the Boers at bay by quick and accurate shooting, and eventually rescued all the incapable wounded, and brought them off.

For this act of conspicuous gallantry Wyllly received the Victoria Cross, was promoted from the ranks, and transferred to the Corps of Guides. This young Officer had had a fairly strenuous time in that narrow defile, but perhaps a later experience was even more trying to the nerves. One day after he had joined The Guides in India, a letter came from the Military Secretary to Lord Kitchener, then Commander-in-Chief in India, asking that Lieutenant Wyllly might be sent down to Calcutta to be vetted as to his suitability to fill a vacancy as A.D.C. to Lord Kitchener. The letter further enjoined that he was not to be told what he was wanted for, and dark hints were to be given that it was something to do with the Intelligence Department.

I, however, took the liberty of ignoring the last part of the letter, for it is always best to be straight and clear with British Officers, and told young Wyllly exactly what he was wanted for, and to be of good cheer, and perfectly natural. Arrived at Calcutta he was subject to the awful ordeal of a trial lunch, having heard just before that three previous candidates, immediately after their lunches, were presented with first-class tickets back to their regiments! His lunch, however, was a success, and he served many years with Lord Kitchener, and was much devoted to him.

A heavy frontal attack was taking place across the dead flat open ground on the Turkish trenches, which were strongly held. On our left the attack partially succeeded, but all along the rest of the line it was held up at distances varying from 100 yards to 500 yards from the Turks. At this moment Sepoy

(now Lance-Naik) Lalla came across a Major in his regiment 150 yards from the enemy, lying completely exposed in the open, and trying to bandage a grievous wound. Lalla dragged him a few yards to a very slight depression only a few inches deep, and there bound up the Major's wounds. Whilst doing so he heard other cries for help, and sallying forth dragged four more of his comrades into the meagre shelter, and bound up their wounds.

Meanwhile it had come on to rain hard, and a pitiless icy wind sprang up. Then Lalla heard another voice calling for help about fifty yards to the front, and only hundred yards from the Turkish trenches. He recognised the voice and said to the Major :

"That is my Adjutant, Sahib, calling. I must go out to help him."

"No, Lalla, it is quite useless," said the Major. "You will certainly be shot dead and therefore be of no use."

Then seeing that Lalla was still preparing to go, he added :

"I order you not to go. Lie down."

Lalla lay still for a bit, and then the voice from the front again called for help.

Up jumped Lalla, and calling out "I'll be back in a minute," dashed out to his Adjutant.

The Adjutant, just before he was taken into the operating-room in hospital, where he died, dictated his evidence to a brother Officer. He said :

"I was shot down in the open about hundred yards from the enemy, and lay in great agony. An Officer of the Black Watch, who was lying wounded a few yards off, tried to crawl to my assistance, but he was instantly shot dead. Every time I made the slightest movement bullets whistled past me, or through me. Then came a Sepoy to my assistance, and he was instantly shot dead. Then it came on

to rain, and a bitter wind sprang up. Then as I lay in great pain suddenly appeared Lalla and lay down beside me with cheering words. First he bound up my wounds, and then taking off his own coat spread it over me. Then he lay down lengthways so as to protect me from the enemy's bullets. For five hours he lay like this in the wet and cold, and all the time kept talking cheerfully and encouragingly to keep my spirits up. At length when it grew dusk he crept off and said he was going back to get assistance and would soon return. I slept or dozed for some time and then heard Lalla return.

"It is good, Sahib, very good. I have brought some stretcher-bearers up not far from this. I will lie flat whilst you get on my back, and then I will crawl away with you on hands and knees.'"

With great difficulty the Adjutant obeyed these instructions and was borne painfully many hundred yards by Lalla to the stretcher-bearers.

Then Lalla said :

"I must return and fetch the Major, Sahib, and those four Sepoys."

And this he did, and brought them all safely out. And wonderful to relate he was not touched by bullet, or shell, all day or night. Next morning he was hale and hearty and cheerful as ever, and grinned with great joyousness when he heard he was a brave man.

The Victoria Cross has only recently been accorded to Indian soldiers, and perhaps there is no worthier wearer of that badge of honour and bravery than Lance-Naik Lalla of the Dogras.



## CHAPTER XXI

### A CRUISE DOWN THE INDUS

A Mighty River—Nine Miles Wide—Its devastations—Dera-Ghazi-Khan Swept Away—The Party—The Fleet—Weighing Anchor—"What's a Log?"—The Telegraph Operator—Lunch on Board—The Lady sees 3000 Geese—We Shoot One—The Fleet Sets Sail—Anchor for the Night—A Few Partridges—Soulful Music—Set Sail Again—Stalking Duck—More Partridges—Struggle with an Alligator—A Night Alarm—"Man Overboard"—The Telegraph Operator's Use—His Night Excursion—Shooting, Lazing and Sailing—A Goanese General—A Scene of Desolation—The Ruined Town—The Church Stands Amazed—Good-bye—Off to Fight the Germans

THE Indus is a mighty river, though you might not think so in the cold weather. Then opposite Dera-Ismail-Khan it flows usually in two channels, one about as broad as the Thames at Westminster, and the other somewhat narrower, nor is it here very deep. But in summer it is a very different river; then the melting of the snows in the Himalayan Mountains, and the heavy rain in the nearer ranges, swell the Indus to great dimensions. It is thirteen miles from Dera-Ismail-Khan Cantonment to the railway station on the opposite bank. In the cold weather all but a few hundred yards of this distance can be driven in a tonga, or ridden on a horse. But in the summer there are nine miles of water which have to be crossed by boat or steamer, and only four miles drivable. That gives the size of the river at its greatest and least.

Nor is it stable in its channel. The original town of Dera-Ismail-Khan lies at the bottom of the

river nine miles west of its present site. And now the new site is threatened after sixty years of steady erosion. The river now flows along the foot of the regimental parade grounds and sometimes floods them. It may continue its western erosion, or it may suddenly discover that the other bank is more interesting, and next year be six miles away.

It thus played a grim joke on Dera-Ghazi-Khan, the next Frontier Cantonment downstream. It attacked it fiercely and strongly; the Indian Government spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in fighting it. Yet it prevailed. It swept away the town of Dera-Ghazi-Khan, it swept away the Cantonments behind it, and then, having played this pleasantry, wandered off into a channel five miles away.

Dera-Ghazi-Khan came into my Brigade area—a somewhat elastic term: for some Brigade areas in India include three sets of barracks, whilst others include territories as large as half of England. This particular Brigade area is half as large as England, and twice as wicked.

It was with a view to visiting this portion of the spacious domains assigned to my Brigade, as well as to see how the fight with the Indus was proceeding, that we took a voyage down that historic river—

The party consisted of the Major, the Ingenuous Subaltern, myself, and last, but not least, the Lady Sahiba. These four decided on a voyage of adventure, two hundred miles down the Indus, from Dera-Ismail-Khan to Dera-Ghazi-Khan. They chose the best time of year, that is February, when the days are bright and not too hot; and the nights not too cold, but just cold enough to sleep in what is known in soldier language as a flea-bag. That is a blanket sewn up into a long thin bag, into which the sleeper can insert himself, boots and all if necessary, and sleep the sleep of the tired hunter, without having

the wind whistling through the cracks, or putting his feet through the end.

The fleet chartered to carry this party and their retinue consisted of three ships. First came the *Saucy Sue*, a square flat-bottomed privateer, painted white with green facings, and having a single mast with a lateen sail. In her sailed the four principal persons as above enumerated; two dogs, one a black chow named "Phoongye," and the other a visitor, a rough-haired fox terrier, "Patch" by name, who hated his canine host with a smouldering passion. Then there was Luckoo, more generally known as the Faithful Servitor, having been twenty odd years in his master's service, and Bugtoo, his son and diminutive understudy. I say son, but Luckoo himself took up a semi-detached attitude on the subject.

The *Saucy Sue* had a crew of six, including the Captain; guns, rifles, fishing rods, and other sporting ventures were also on this ship.

In the second ship, named The *Slippery Sal*, sailed the rest of the servants, and in the East their number is legion; the provinder, the kitchen, and the telegraph operator. This ship was of the same pattern as the *Saucy Sue*, but more humbly adorned.

In the third vessel might be found tents, the soldiers of the escort, and other warlike impedimenta. Her name was the *Brazen Bess*, and she looked rather like it.

The objects of the expedition were several fold. A general and genial outing was the broad outline of the scheme; but there was also every intention of shooting large quantities of wild geese, duck, teal, and partridges both black and grey; also alligators to be made later into Gladstone bags. Then the fishermen of the party expected good sport in that line, and visions of a 50-lb. mahseer were constantly before their eyes. Next and somewhat

incidentally, it was the duty of one of the party to make a military report on all the fords, ferries, and passages of the Indus which we encountered. And finally we were travelling down to see a strange spectacle, a great town and cantonment in process of being swept away by a great river. This was the town and cantonment of Dera-Ghazi-Khan—now no more.

The fleet was timed to weigh anchor at 10 a.m. on Monday, but did not for various reasons. The chiefest of these is that rarely, if ever, does a fleet, or for that matter a single ship, start at a given hour, but always an hour or more later. The only exception to this rule is when some of the passengers, relying on this well-known habit, come down that one hour later. On that occasion, right down through the ages from the days of Noah, the ship will sail punctually, taking their baggage and leaving the passengers behind. It was therefore in a spirit of some self-congratulation that we weighed only an hour and twenty minutes late. To an ignorant landsman those eighty minutes appeared to have been wasted in spurious futilities, but no doubt they were all necessary. Anyway, at 11.20 a.m. the fleet set sail, in line ahead; the *Saucy Sue* leading, followed by the *Slippery Sal*, the rear being brought up by the *Brazen Bess*.

"What the twelfth-letter-in-the-alphabet is a log?" asked the Ingenuous Subaltern, picking up a book from the seat.

"A log, my dear boy," said the Major impressively, "is a thing you tow behind you when at sea—or on a river."

"Well, *I* thought it was a thing the captain wrote secretly in his cabin every day, all about nothing," chimed in the Lady of the party.

"You are both perfectly right," summed up the oldest of the party, judiciously.

"All right, let's have one," voted the Ingenuous one. "The General shall write it, the Major shall supply the meat, the Lady the fashionable gossip, and I'll tow it overboard when finished."

And it is from this veracious document that the present story comes.

"Who is that strange-looking person up in the bows of the *Slippery Sal*, with a many-coloured worsted comforter worn as a pugaree?" asked the Lady.

"That is the telegraph operator," volunteered the I.S.

"What on earth is a telegraph operator? And how does he operate on a river?" demanded the Lady.

"That, my dear Lady, you will discover when you run short of hairpins," answered the Major.

Evidently the telegraph operator had some doubts himself. From his gloomy bearing and appearance he evidently foresaw that he was committed to a deadly adventure, a mere forlorn hope.

The wind now dropped, and though we had a good current, progress was so slow that the Captain ordered out the sweeps, and the privateersmen being experts at these unwieldy weapons, we made good way. After about three hours of thus voyaging the party got sensibly hungrier, possibly with the exertion of watching the rowers. They, therefore, signalled up the *Slippery Sal*, which carried the lunch.

It was whilst lazily slipping along after lunch that the sharp eyes of the Lady, possibly because they were the only ones open, descried our first quarry. There were, according to the Lady's computation, exactly 3000 geese on and near an island about half a mile downstream. The fleet therefore came hastily to anchor, and the tender shoved off with the three guns on board, to shoot a bird or



two for dinner. The geese had, fortunately for us, but unfortunately for themselves, never seen a tender or a fleet before; or even apparently the glint of a gun. The intrepid party in the punt were thus enabled to approach quite close to the quarry without muffled oars, and arrived there, to fire a broadside into the brown. At the sound of the loud report 2999 geese, considerably agitated judging by their remarks, got up and flew away, whilst one remained.

"Mine, I think," said the Major.

"Well, it so happened that that is the exact one I aimed at. I had him right on end of my gun all the time," protested the I.S.

"As a matter of fact he is probably mine," put in the General, "for you two were apparently firing with No. 5, and nothing short of No. 2 will get through a wild goose's skin."

"They have all settled again," remarked the boatman.

And so they had, in the most confiding and goose-like manner, about half a mile down, and most of them under a steep bank.

The plan of operations this time was much more elaborate. Two guns went ashore at once, and making a long detour turned inwards towards the steep bank. The tender was then let slip, and dropped slowly down on to the white crowd. As was intended, the geese watched the tender till it got fairly close to them. Then they began to show signs of anxiety. A lucky long shot brought down one, and the rest went off over the two shore guns, two tremendous thumps on the ground signalling two more down. We had now enough fresh game to provision the fleet, and the geese went off into the next province.

About this time a stiff breeze sprang up, and the fleet received orders to set sail. To a soldier this

would seem an easy enough operation. You just pull one rope which hoists the sail, and then tie down its two spare corners, and there you are ! But to our sailors, experienced old river salts, the true magnitude of the task was at once apparent. In the first place, the sail was a tangled mass of ropes and poles and canvas, stowed away so that no one could get at it. During the preliminary disentanglement the flagship ran up into the wind, and incidentally on to the shore. But the wind caught her another biff, and blew her off, but only to waltz round and run hard ashore again. After severely injuring several more portions of the foreshore, the good ship *Saucy Sue* was got before the wind, and sailed with great swiftness for 800 yards, when she ran hard on a sandbank, and in getting off this on to another. The crew being now exhausted, and the fleet feeling rather sore underneath, it was decided to anchor for the night on a lee shore. By orders of the Admiral the sails were furled by parties standing on the bank, the fleet unloaded, and camp pitched on a desert island.

While camp was being pitched, a couple of guns, accompanied by the two dogs, went off to try and shoot some of the partridges which could be heard calling all round. After the first shot "Phoongye," the chow dog, with completely shattered nerves hastily returned, and hid in the bottom of one of the boats ; whilst "Patch," the terrier, having eaten one partridge, ranged so wide in search of another that long shots were the order of the evening. However, the gunners came back very pleased with themselves, if not with "Patch," and added sensibly to our larder. Meanwhile Bugtoo, who was the only keen fisherman of the party, first landed a stickleback, and then by way of contrast hooked a mahseer as big as himself ; a fish which required the united efforts of six boatmen,

with an extraordinary amount of conversation, to land.

Under a bright starlight sky and a half moon, we sat down to good camp fare, prepared under the auspices of the Lady and the I.S. ; with a bottle of beer, and a glass of port to follow. After dinner, what with the moon on the water and one thing and another, the I.S. was moved to sing songs to his guitar, apparently not only about one siren's grey eyes, but also about some other good lady's eyes-of-blue. These had a soporific effect, and as we each had a little tent to sleep in, soon nothing was to be heard but the low droning of the anchor watch, and the soft footfall of the sentry on his beat.

Next morning we were up betimes ; had struck and packed camp on board, and set sail by 8.30 a.m. We had not gone far, however, when a large number of duck and teal could be seen, but right out in the middle of the river and difficult of approach. We did not see much chance of floating down on them, for duck are generally very wild on this river, so we contrived a drive on the off chance of getting a shot. The ships were anchored with their sails set, this being a familiar object ; whilst one gun was landed on each bank and the third remained on board. Next some boatmen and the dogs were sent round by land to cut in below the duck and drive them up-stream. The duck came up all right, but at a great height, and only a brace fell to the guns.

A little further downstream the fleet came to a good patch of rough grass and bushes, near a village, and hearing partridge calling the guns disembarked. Here during an hour's walk they picked up half a dozen brace. They also bought some very precious eggs, and the fowls that laid them, at the village.

But the triumph of the day was a large alligator. Shots had been fired at several, and these, though apparently hard hit, managed to slide into the water,

where by common consent they were eaten by their friends and relations. Anyway, they never appeared again, alive or dead. But this fellow was hit in the neck and lay completely stunned, with his tail standing straight up over his back, like a scorpion. Having learnt by previous experience that to fire another shot had the mysterious effect of galvanizing an alligator into sufficient life to convulsively heave him into deep water, this time he was approached very quietly indeed in the tender; and when arrived close, two of the boatmen got out and wading closer still, very deftly threw a rope round his tail. Then the monster woke up suddenly, and there was a very lively and chaotic encounter which lasted for some minutes. For a good-sized alligator has the strength of a dozen men. After everyone had got very wet, and somewhat exhausted, we hauled the monster clear enough ashore to get a shot through his head, and this finished him. A suit-case made out of his skin was the trophy of this heroic struggle.

A few more duck were shot, and then we tied up for the night. Whilst camp was being pitched a few partridges were added to the bag. That night there were mysterious scratchings, followed by violent barking on the part of the dogs. When the sentry closed up to it he saw a big beast, probably a hyena, searching for somebody, probably Bugtoo. The sentry blazed at the beast, and missed like a man. This woke up the whole camp, thinking a midnight attack was being made by some stray raiding party. Explanations on the part of the sentry, and peevish remarks from everybody else. And so to bed again.

Next day we set sail early, and again there was a strong N.W. breeze, which carried us along at a great pace; but the flagship, being flat-bottomed, made much leeway, and also sandbanks were, as often as not, collided with; this lost much valuable



time and space. The ship's crew being also of Eastern blood, did things in an Eastern way, that is to say, the longest and fuddliest way; with bits of garments dropping off at critical moments. As someone has said, we need not fear being turned forcibly out of India till the people of that land have assumed a costume which does not fall off in parts, whenever they start to do anything.

We saw one large flock of geese in a field, and a few duck here and there, but did not draw trigger all the morning. The scenery the whole way was exactly the same, a flat muddy-coloured river, meandering at about two and a half miles an hour through a perfectly flat, sandy desert. Occasionally a patch of high grass scrub, and now and again in the course of a day a tree was seen. For the rest, flat desolation. In the far distance to the west an occasional glimpse through the haze of the Suleiman Range.

R-r-r-ripp, smack! That is the side awning tearing. Why? Because our beloved Aryan brother can rarely use an article, or instrument, or anything, for the express purpose for which it is made. He uses something else, as unsuitable as lies handy, and it generally breaks. The *Saucy Sue* and the *Slippery Sal*, being warped alongside for a meal, one would naturally have tied them together with ropes, or other suitable attachments. Not so the brother. He ties together the awning strings of both ships, and then at the moment of parting forgets to undo them. Hence the rip, smack!

"Man overboard!" Quite so. And now? Why, also of course in the manner of the East. We were tacking, and when tacking all the crew, from the Captain downwards, has a word to say, generally pitched in a key that can be heard a mile off. One brave mariner was holding the sheet with one hand, trying to roll up several yards of his pugaree with the other, and at the same time talking torrentially.



Puff comes a blast of wind, out goes the sheet, and the mariner at the end of it, whilst his pugaree forms a long pennant to the group. The puff went by, and souse went the sheet end, and our friend into the water. Then we all set to work earning the Humane Society's Medal and cursing the mariner for making us wet. End of incident.

That evening we gave the telegraph operator an answer to the Lady's question of the first day.

"Look here, sonny, you will walk as fast as you can due west till you hit a telegraph line ; it may be six miles off, and it may be sixteen. When you hit it, tap the wire, and see if you can get any news ; and in return send news of the safety, and present position, of this Armada."

"God forbid, sir ! I shall certainly perish from bad men on this journey."

"Oh no, you won't, Babu. You ain't worth killing. You just trot along."

"Sir, you are very harsh man. But I beget my wife and children to your Honour's generosity."

"Thanks, Babu, but you are going to support them yourself for many a long day. Off you go."

So, with a villager for a guide, off went Babu Moti Ram, the telegraph operator ; and eventually hit the line about six miles off. Having arrived at this haven of safety, where at any rate he could talk both ways—that is, either to his friend Babujee Dinshaw at Dera-Ismail-Khan, or to Narain Das at Dera-Ghazi-Khan—he decided to take no further risks and absolutely refused to face the perils of the journey back to the river.

Here, with his back to the telegraph post, he felt safe, and at home. It was only with courage begotten of the first streak of dawn that the villager induced him to trek back to the boats ; further imbued with the fear that delay might result in his being left behind in these awful and impenetrable deserts.

"Where no man can live soundly," as he was heard to explain afterwards.

Yet these are the people who for some years appear to have seriously shaken the nerves of the Government of India.

And so our cruise continued : shooting, sailing, and lazing by day ; a little fishing in the evening, and a bright little camp in a bright little spot every night. It was therefore with some regret that we at length saw, spanning the distant horizon, a white bridge of boats which we knew betokened Dera-Ghazi-Khan, and the end of our river cruise.

At this particular moment, and happily not before, our noble cook, reputed to be a Brigadier-General in the Goanese Army, fell sick. One can receive with well-restrained equanimity the news of the regrettable departure from this vale of tears of many of our friends ; but only those who are built in the heroic mould can without emotion hear of the slightest ailment which may attack their cook. Ours happily survived, and is now very possibly a Field-Marshal fighting against the Germans in East Africa.

As we stood on the middle boat of the bridge, the toll keeper remarked, " You are now standing over the exact spot where the spire of the Mission Church was a few months ago."

We looked down but could see no spire. South and south-west from here, and only a few hundred yards off, the sight of a mighty river demolishing a great town met our gaze. More than half of this town of thirty thousand inhabitants had already been swept away ; and the rest was now going in large slabs and slices, as the great river rolled relentlessly past it. The remaining houses, temples and shops were now all forsaken, and hundreds of homeless families were camped about on the higher ground further inland.

The Cantonment had been evacuated by the troops ; and there lay sad and desolate, awaiting its inevitable end. The Garrison Church stood without doors and windows agape with sad amazement. Even the tombs of the dead had been dismantled, and their monuments moved to a new land. All round stood enormous banks and defences showing the heroic fight of the engineers, and the hundreds of thousands of pounds spent, in the vain endeavour to fight the great river. It was a sad and dispiriting scene.

Only the imperturbable good spirits of the Ingenuous Subaltern kept us from passing a rather mournful evening—our last.

“ Well, good-bye all,” said the Lady, “ and next year we must take another cruise.”

But that cruise never came off, for the Emperor Wilhelm II claimed our attention next year.



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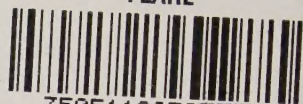








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